✕ **Brandon Hall Group™**

HR OUTLOOK 2025

The Quantum Leap: How AI and Human Ingenuity are Redefining Learning, Talent and HR Strategies

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INTRODUCTION

The Key to Success:
Embracing the
Human-AI Partnership

We stand at an inflection point in the evolution of human resources (HR). The convergence of artificial intelligence (AI), changing workforce expectations and global economic pressures is fundamentally reshaping how organizations attract, develop, and engage talent.

This transformation isn't just about technology adoption – it's about reimagining the very nature of work and human potential.

Brandon Hall Group™ research reveals a striking paradox: while AI and automation are becoming increasingly sophisticated, the need for distinctly human capabilities has never been greater. Organizations that thrive in 2025 and beyond will be those that master the delicate balance between technological advancement and human ingenuity.

Consider this: Our HR Outlook 2025 study reveals that only 8% of organizations currently see AI having a high impact on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, while 60% anticipate AI significantly transforming learning and development. This disparity highlights a crucial insight: we're still in the early stages of understanding how to leverage AI across the full spectrum of human capital management.

The challenge ahead isn't simply about implementing new technologies. It's about fundamentally rethinking how we develop leaders who can foster innovation in human-AI hybrid teams, create learning ecosystems that adapt in real time to business needs, and build cultures of psychological safety and belonging in increasingly virtual environments.

Our research points to several critical shifts that will define the future of HR:

The traditional approach to talent development will give way to more sophisticated, AI-enabled ecosystems that combine personalized learning pathways, immersive experiences and real-time skill development. Organizations that master this transition will create unprecedented opportunities for human growth and innovation.

There will be a profound transformation in how organizations develop leaders for an AI-enabled future. Our research shows that 47% of organizations expect AI to have a high impact on leadership development in 2025. We envision the most innovative organizations moving beyond traditional leadership models to cultivate what we call "resilient digital collaborators" – leaders who can seamlessly navigate between human and AI capabilities, foster innovation in virtual environments, and make ethical decisions in increasingly complex digital ecosystems. These leaders must master not only the technical aspects of AI but also develop enhanced emotional intelligence and cultural competence to guide diverse, distributed teams through continuous change.

We believe organizations will design workplace experiences that dynamically adapt to human needs while leveraging AI to enhance productivity and creativity. This isn't about replacing human judgment but augmenting it with data-driven insights and automated support systems.

And we believe there must be a fundamental shift in how organizations approach inclusion and equity. The focus is evolving from traditional diversity metrics to creating cultures of genuine belonging, supported by AI tools that help identify and eliminate systemic barriers to development and advancement.

However, these opportunities come with significant ethical, philosophical and operational challenges. Our research shows that while 73% of organizations plan to invest heavily in technology for human capital management in 2025, many struggle with implementation and cultural adoption. The risk of widening the gap between organizations that successfully navigate this transformation and those that don't is real and growing. Looking ahead, we envision a future where human capital management becomes the primary driver of organizational success. This isn't just about operational efficiency – it's about unleashing human potential in ways previously unimagined. AI will play a crucial role, but not as a replacement for human capability. Instead, it will serve as a catalyst for human creativity, innovation, and growth.

The pages that follow offer a detailed examination and roadmap for this transformation, grounded in extensive research and real-world examples. We explore how organizations can create more resilient, adaptable, and human-centric workplaces while leveraging the full potential of AI and emerging technologies. And we offer bold predictions of what the future holds, both in the near term and the years ahead.

The choices organizations make today will determine whether they merely survive or truly thrive in the years ahead. The opportunity before us is unprecedented. The question is: Are we ready to seize it?

**MIKE COOKE
CEO
BRANDON HALL GROUP™**

01

REALITY CHECK

Is Learning the Key to Success or Just Hype?

As employers navigate an AI-powered future, L&D must become completely aligned with business objectives and drive innovation and performance

CURRENT STATE

As employers navigate a challenging new era of work, the learning and development (L&D) landscape is experiencing unprecedented transformation. The evolution of L&D has never been more crucial, as organizations recognize its vital role in driving success in our rapidly changing business environment. With AI and emerging technologies reshaping industries, L&D stands at the threshold of remarkable opportunities.

Forward-thinking organizations are already expanding their L&D teams to include data scientists, experience designers, cognitive psychologists and AI specialists. These diverse teams are pioneering immersive, adaptive learning ecosystems that seamlessly integrate learning with work and innovation.

Today's business environment calls for an adaptable workforce capable of quick pivoting and continuous skill development. L&D is uniquely positioned to facilitate this transformation, helping organizations build the capabilities needed for future success.

The financial landscape for L&D presents both challenges and opportunities. While many organizations operate with constrained budgets, innovative L&D teams are finding creative ways to maximize impact through strategic partnerships, extended enterprise learning that makes L&D a potential profit center, technology optimization and data-driven approaches.

Learning Budget Ranges (By Company Size)

Small organizations
(Under 1,000 employees)
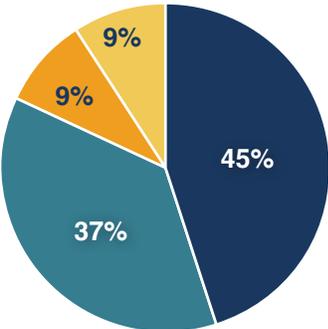
Mid-size organizations
(1,001-25,000 employees)
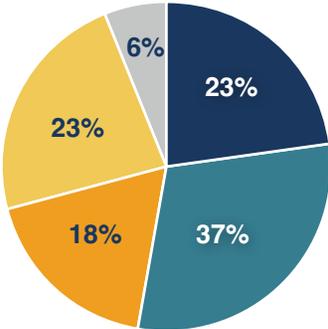
Large organizations
(25,000+ employees)

Small organizations: 45%, 37%, 9%, 9%

Mid-size organizations: 23%, 37%, 18%, 23%, 6%

Large organizations: 10%, 16%, 17%, 38%, 19%

Legend:
- Under $100,000
- $100,000-$500,000
- $500,000 - $1m
- $1m-$10m
- $10m-$50m
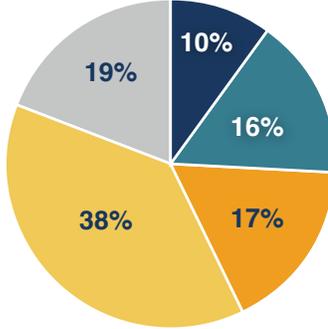
Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, The Learning Revolution

Progressive L&D teams are increasingly focusing on demonstrating clear business impact through improved performance metrics, enhanced employee engagement and accelerated innovation. By leveraging new technologies and methodologies, L&D can create more effective, efficient and engaging learning experiences that directly contribute to organizational goals.

The future of L&D lies in its ability to embrace change while staying focused on its core mission: developing human potential. As organizations navigate these complexities, L&D has the opportunity to lead the way in building adaptable, skilled and future-ready workforces. The challenge ahead is significant, but so too is the potential for L&D to reshape how organizations learn, grow and succeed.

COMPLEXITIES

L&D faces significant challenges today. A major issue is measurement paralysis, where L&D struggles to quantify its impact on business outcomes. This measurement challenge is closely tied to a strategic disconnect. L&D too often operates in isolation, out of sync with fast-changing business needs.

Every year, our research respondents tell us that aligning learning with business priorities is their greatest challenge. By the time a learning program is implemented, business priorities may have shifted. This misalignment is often aggravated by poor communication between L&D, executive leadership and line managers.

Engaging learners also has become increasingly difficult in a world of constant digital distractions. L&D must compete for attention by creating captivating, personalized learning experiences that leverage new technologies and insights from cognitive science.

Innovative L&D teams are rising to this challenge by creating immersive, personalized learning experiences that leverage cutting-edge technologies and insights from cognitive science. These engaging approaches are proving that effective learning can compete successfully for attention in our digital world.

The key to maximizing learning impact lies in creating comprehensive development ecosystems. Leading organizations are bridging the implementation gap by combining formal learning with practical application, mentoring and real-world projects. This holistic approach ensures that new skills translate directly into improved job performance.

To remain relevant, L&D must evolve on multiple fronts:

- ✦ Specific, measurable objectives
- ✦ Clear performance indicators
- ✦ Defined success criteria
- ✦ Timeline-based milestones
- ✦ Observable outcomes

Underlying these challenges is cultural inertia. Many organizations claim to value learning without truly embedding it into their culture. This shows up as inadequate resources for learning initiatives and performance metrics that don't prioritize continuous development. L&D must become a change agent, advocating for a cultural transformation that places learning at the heart of organizational strategy.

Competencies that L&D Practitioners Believe Are Most Valuable for Them

Consulting
77%

Design thinking
74%

Collaboration
72%

Learning agility
70%

Strategic planning and execution
67%

Business acumen
65%
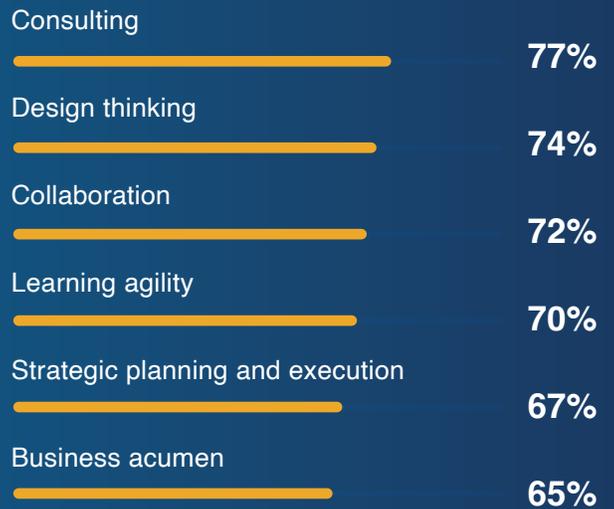
Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, The Learning Revolution

Leveraging the Power of AI

Leveraging the power and promise of AI technology is a critical tool in this evolution. AI technology is gaining in acceptance, but actual use remains low in learning. Nearly 25% of organizations have identified no real benefit to incorporating AI technology, which is concerning. AI is not going to fade out as some passing technology fad. L&D teams need to get on board and ahead of the curve to help drive effective and powerful impact from available and developing AI technologies.

How Organizations See the Benefits and Barriers to Using AI in Learning

— Barriers

Data privacy and security concerns
59%

Lack of AI expertise and knowledge
59%

Regulatory and compliance concerns
44%

Lack of budget/resources
37%

Technical complexity and implementation challenges
37%

Uncertainty about ROI and business impact
24%

+ Benefits

Reduced training costs and increased efficiency
41%

Personalized learning experiences
28%

Improved learning-analytics and data-driven insights
26%

No discernible benefits
23%

Increased employee engagement and motivation
21%

Faster skill development and mastery
13%

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, The Learning Revolution

Many companies haven't found a way to mitigate concerns or build their expertise fast enough to make strategic use of AI. Organizational caution is generally wise, but if that caution establishes a pattern of indecision and inaction, that could spell disaster. One-third of organizations are not using AI at all. This must change if L&D is going to remain relevant and effective.

In an era where adaptability and continuous learning are crucial competitive advantages, L&D has the potential to be a key driver of organizational success. However, it must rise to these challenges. The future of L&D, and the organizations it serves, depends on its ability to adapt and thrive in this new landscape.
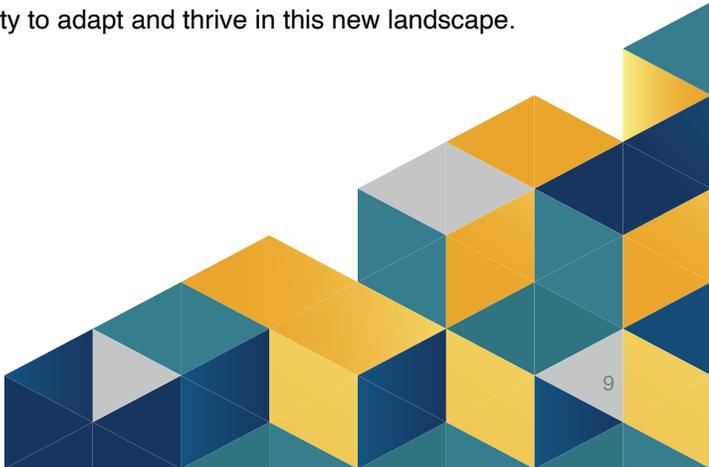
IMPLICATIONS

If L&D can successfully address the challenges, the impact could be far-reaching:

Investment and ROI

Organizations that effectively demonstrate L&D's value through clear metrics and business impact will secure and expand their learning budgets. By linking learning initiatives to key performance indicators, innovative L&D teams are building compelling business cases for sustained investment. Forward-thinking companies recognize that strategic investment in learning directly correlates with improved organizational performance and competitive advantage.

Talent Development and Retention

In today's knowledge economy, leading organizations are differentiating themselves through robust learning opportunities. Companies that prioritize employee development are becoming employers of choice, attracting and retaining top talent who drive innovation and growth. By creating comprehensive learning ecosystems, organizations can build engaged, skilled workforces that fuel sustainable success.

Top Priorities for Learning Functions in 2025

Improve alignment between learning strategy and business goals
75%

Improve learning measurement and analytics
64%

Improve the learner experience
63%

Deploy strategies to prove employees can apply learned skills on the job
59%

Leverage AI and automation to support upskilling/reskilling the workforce
56%
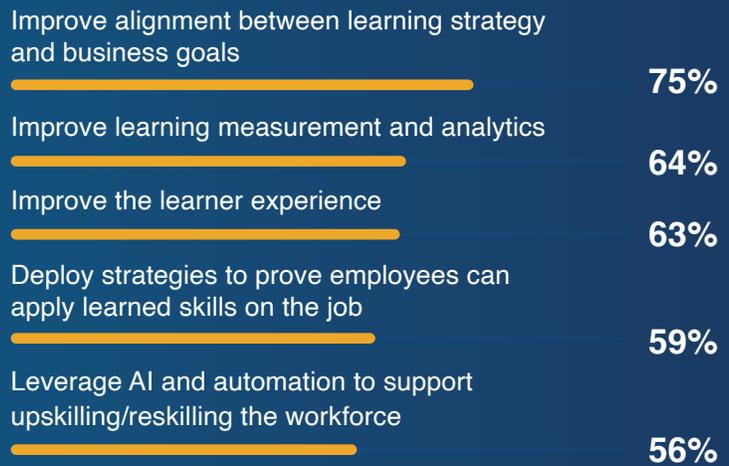
Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, HR Outlook 2025

Competitive Advantage Through Skills

Agile organizations are gaining market leadership by prioritizing rapid workforce upskilling. In our era of technological advancement, the ability to quickly develop and deploy new capabilities is becoming a crucial differentiator. Companies that build effective learning systems are better positioned to innovate, adapt to new technologies, and meet evolving customer needs.

Strategic Partnership

L&D functions that align closely with business strategy are becoming indispensable partners in organizational success. As companies navigate digital transformation and evolving business models, L&D leaders who communicate in business terms and demonstrate clear impact are increasingly valued as strategic advisors. By focusing on business outcomes and bottom-line results, L&D can help shape key decisions and drive organizational transformation.

Innovation Through Learning

A strong learning culture catalyzes innovation across the organization. When continuous learning becomes part of the organizational DNA, it creates an environment where new ideas flourish and creative problem-solving becomes the norm. Organizations that successfully integrate learning into their daily operations are better equipped to generate breakthrough insights and drive meaningful innovation.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

The most critical question facing L&D leaders is this: How can L&D truly align with the needs of the business to the point that learning is as essential to the day-to-day operations as finance or customer service or sales? Other important questions to consider:

How can we integrate AI effectively – and safely – into our learning workflows?

How can we adopt a truly data-driven mindset?

What would it look like to embrace learning agility and shift from a programmatic focus to learning ecosystem approach?

How can we better integrate learning into the flow of work?

BRANDON HALL GROUP™ POINT OF VIEW

The learning revolution is not coming — it's here. L&D professionals must lead the charge into this new era or be left behind. The organizations that embrace this paradigm shift will not only survive but thrive, creating agile, innovative workforces capable of navigating the challenges of the AI age.

Embrace AI or Perish

AI is not just another tool; it's the only way L&D will keep pace with the rate of change. From personalized learning paths to real-time skill gap analysis, AI must be at the core of L&D strategy. This means not just adopting AI-powered learning platforms, but fundamentally rethinking the role of L&D professionals as orchestrators of AI-driven learning experiences. L&D must leverage AI to create adaptive learning systems that evolve in real-time based on individual learner needs and organizational priorities.

Learning teams should invest time in learning about generative AI technologies, their capabilities and their applications in corporate learning. Then determine specific areas where generative AI can add value to your learning initiatives. Don't limit the possibilities and prioritize the opportunities once you have a good list. Gradually incorporate GenAI as a tool in your content creation and instructional design processes. Use it to brainstorm ideas, generate drafts or create interactive elements that enhance learner engagement.

Shift from Programs to Ecosystems

Abandon the notion of isolated training programs. Instead, create dynamic learning ecosystems that adapt in real-time to business needs and individual learner profiles. This ecosystem approach integrates formal and informal learning, leverages social and collaborative learning technologies and creates a seamless interface between learning and work.

It's about creating an environment where learning is continuous, contextual and directly tied to performance outcomes.

Adopt a Data-Driven Mindset

Every learning initiative must be rooted in data. Implement robust analytics that directly tie learning outcomes to business KPIs. This requires a fundamental shift in how L&D approaches measurement, moving beyond learning metrics to business impact metrics. L&D must become proficient in data analysis, predictive modeling and impact visualization to effectively communicate the value of learning initiatives to stakeholders across the organization.

Cultivate Learning Agility

Focus on developing meta-learning skills that enable employees to rapidly acquire new competencies as needed. In a world where specific skills may become obsolete quickly, the ability to learn, unlearn and relearn is paramount. L&D must design interventions that not only impart knowledge but also enhance cognitive flexibility, critical thinking and self-directed learning capabilities.

Integrate Learning into the Flow of Work

Learning must be seamlessly woven into daily tasks and workflows. This means leveraging technologies like augmented reality, performance support tools and AI-powered chatbots to deliver just-in-time learning at the point of need. The goal is to make learning an integral part of how work gets done, rather than a separate activity that competes for time and attention.

Be Bold

This is not a time for incremental change or cautious experimentation. L&D must undergo a reinvention, shedding outdated paradigms and fully embracing the transformative potential of AI and emerging technologies. This requires not just new tools and technologies, but a fundamental rethinking of the role of L&D within organizations.

PREDICTIONS

No one can truly know what the future holds. But based on our research and current trends, these developments over the next few years are quite possible:

Emotion AI Will Be Leveraged

In the near future, adaptive learning platforms will incorporate real-time emotion recognition, adjusting content delivery based on learner engagement and emotional state, leading to unprecedented levels of knowledge retention and application. These systems will use facial recognition, voice analysis and biometric data to create a holistic picture of the learner's emotional state. Learning experiences will dynamically adjust to maintain optimal levels of challenge and engagement, mitigating frustration and boredom in real-time.

Organizations Will Benefit from Cognitive Enhancement Integration

Biofeedback-enhanced focus training will eventually become standard, with wearable tech providing real-time cognitive optimization during learning sessions, dramatically improving information processing and retention. These systems will go beyond simple attention monitoring, actively modulating brain states through techniques like transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) and neurofeedback. Learners will be able to enter optimal learning states on demand, significantly accelerating skill acquisition and knowledge retention.

Neuroplasticity-Driven Personalization Will Emerge

In the relatively near future, leading organizations will leverage AI-powered neuroplasticity insights to create hyper-personalized learning experiences that rewire neural pathways for accelerated skill acquisition. These systems will use advanced brain-computer interfaces and real-time neuroimaging to tailor learning content and delivery methods to individual cognitive patterns. This will result in learning experiences that are not just personalized in terms of content, but optimized for each learner's unique neural architecture.

Holographic Mentorship Networks Will Be Introduced

Global expertise will be democratized through holographic technology in the years ahead, allowing employees to interact with life-sized projections of world-class experts and mentors, transcending geographical boundaries. These holographic mentors will be powered by advanced AI, capable of engaging in nuanced dialogue and providing contextualized guidance. This technology will revolutionize knowledge transfer, allowing organizations to scale expertise and provide immersive learning experiences regardless of physical location.

Organizations Will Create Swarm Learning Ecosystems

Organizations will create AI-facilitated swarm learning environments where collective intelligence is harnessed to solve complex problems and drive rapid innovation. These systems will use advanced algorithms to orchestrate large-scale collaborative learning and problem-solving sessions, dynamically forming and reforming teams based on real-time assessment of skills and cognitive diversity. This approach will not only accelerate learning but also drive breakthrough innovations by leveraging the collective cognitive capabilities of the entire organization.

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02

TALENT MANAGEMENT SUCCESS:

Empowering Excellence Through Strategic Execution

As technology and workplace expectations rapidly evolve, organizations that execute strategically on talent initiatives can transform challenges into opportunities, creating more dynamic, engaged and capable workforces

CURRENT STATE

We stand at the dawn of an unprecedented opportunity in talent management. Organizations that execute strategically on their talent initiatives are creating extraordinary value, driving innovation and building workforces that are more capable, engaged and future-ready than ever before.

The convergence of technology, changing workforce dynamics and evolving employee expectations has created a perfect moment for transformation. While some see challenges in the current landscape of workforce volatility and technological change, forward-thinking organizations recognize these as catalysts for positive change. They're leveraging AI and automation to enhance human potential, reimagining career development to meet the purposeful aspirations of Millennials and Gen Z, and creating employee experiences that drive both personal fulfillment and business success.

Organizations that execute effectively on their talent strategies can realize remarkable results:

- ◆ Higher retention of key talent through meaningful career progression

- ◆ Accelerated skill development aligned with future business needs

- ◆ Increased internal mobility driving both employee growth and organizational agility

- ◆ A workforce that's energized, capable and prepared to lead in the future of work

This is the moment to transform talent management from a support function into a strategic driver of business success. The stakes couldn't be higher.

How Organizations Rank Talent Management Priorities for 2025

58% Improve employee experience, engagement and retention

58% Address competency and skill gap assessment

32% Improve alignment between talent strategy and business goals

45% Move toward continuous performance management

43% Empower and enable employees to own their career development

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, HR Outlook 2025

In a world where talent is the ultimate competitive advantage, the ability to execute talent management strategies will separate the leaders from the also-rans. It's about making a real, measurable impact — boosting retention, accelerating skill development, increasing internal mobility and creating a workforce that's not just prepared for the future, but excited about it.

This is the new battleground of business success. And in this battle, execution isn't just important — it's everything.

COMPLEXITIES

Organizations are struggling with a mix of structural, long-term challenges and newer techno-economical changes that create uncertainty and the potential for chaos. At Brandon Hall Group™, we believe employers can turn these challenges into competitive advantages through strategic action and innovative thinking.

The Evolution of Workforce Engagement

The global talent marketplace has fundamentally transformed how organizations think about engagement and retention. Our research shows that organizations succeeding in this new environment embrace the opportunities presented by an increasingly connected world. The ability to build diverse, multicultural teams has expanded not just the available talent pool, but the very way we think about collaboration and innovation.

This new reality of work brings together multiple generations, each with unique perspectives and strengths. Leading organizations are creating environments where this diversity drives innovation. We're witnessing the emergence of powerful knowledge-sharing networks, where reverse mentoring programs allow younger employees to share digital expertise while learning from the deep industry experience of their senior colleagues.

The remote work revolution has further reshaped the talent landscape. Organizations no longer need to choose between access to global talent and maintaining a strong corporate culture. We're seeing innovative approaches to virtual collaboration that maintain productivity while fostering genuine connection. The most successful organizations are those that have learned to blend the flexibility of remote work with the collaborative energy of in-person interaction.

New Skills Are Creating New Skill Gaps

New skill gaps are emerging as technology outpaces traditional upskilling methods. The half-life of skills is shrinking at an alarming rate, making traditional training programs obsolete almost as soon as they are implemented.

New Job Roles Requiring Skills Not Previously Required

93%	98%	89%
Overall	Over 5,000 employees	Under 5,000 employees

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, Hiring for New Skills and New Roles

Forward-thinking organizations are responding by creating skill-development ecosystems. These new approaches combine formal learning with experiential opportunities, creating more engaging and effective paths to mastery. We see a bright future for organizations that use advanced analytics to anticipate future skill needs. This predictive approach allows them to prepare their workforce proactively rather than reactively, ensuring they stay ahead of industry changes. Organizations will need to create internal talent marketplaces that match skills with opportunities, enabling more fluid career movement and faster skill development.

AI and Automation

The integration of AI and automation into talent management represents a tremendous opportunity — and challenge. Many organizations are struggling with data privacy concerns and a lack of AI expertise presenting the biggest challenges, according to Brandon Hall Group™ research.

Barriers to AI Adoption

Data privacy and security concerns
59%

Lack of AI expertise and knowledge
59%

Regulatory and compliance concerns
44%

Lack of budget/resources
37%

Technical complexity and implementation challenges
37%

Uncertainty about ROI and business impact
24%

No discernable challenges or barriers
17%

Resistance to change among employees
12%

Resistance to change from leadership
12%

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, The Learning Revolution

Organizations need to work through these barriers, but they don't have to do it alone. Talent management and other HR disciplines should work across functions to develop an AI strategy and governance and gain the skills and resources required to leverage the potential of AI and automation. Our research shows that organizations that approach AI implementation thoughtfully are discovering new ways to personalize the employee experience while maintaining the human connection that drives engagement.

We're particularly excited about how AI can help managers work more closely with their teams. By handling routine tasks and providing data-driven insights, AI tools can enable managers at all levels to focus more time on coaching, feedback and collaborating with the team members on career development. This shift is essential for developing the kind of talent development that all organizations need.

Regulatory Complexity Is on the Rise

Rapidly evolving labor laws and regulations can create compliance headaches, especially for large multinational corporations. What was legal yesterday could be grounds for a lawsuit tomorrow. However, with the right approach, organizations can develop more sophisticated and equitable talent practices. The changes created a need for increased transparency in everything from performance management to compensation. Doing so can build trust and improve the overall employee experience.

We're particularly encouraged by how compliance requirements are pushing organizations toward more data-informed approaches to talent decisions. This shift not only ensures fairness but also leads to better outcomes for both individuals and organizations. The harmonization of international labor standards can also create opportunities for organizations to develop more consistent global talent practices while respecting local cultural nuances.

IMPLICATIONS

The key to success in talent management is responsibly leveraging emerging technologies. Making continuous progress in upskilling, employee experience and AI-powered innovations is critical to keep organizations competitive. Here are ideas for a responsible way forward:
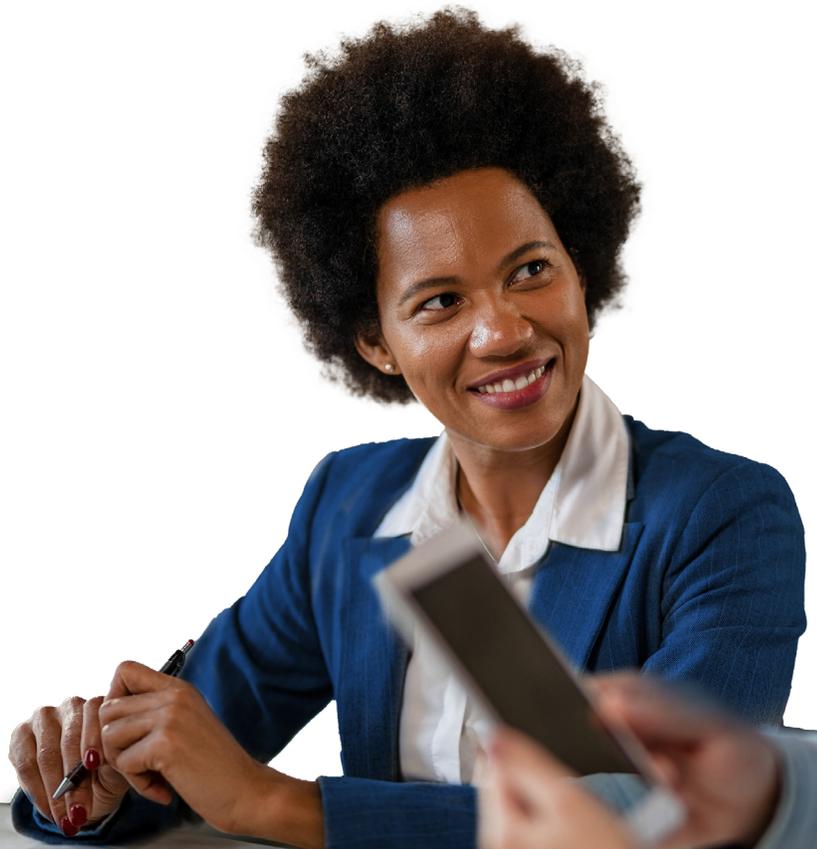
Workforce Transformation

The evolution of work demands a fundamental reimagining of how we develop talent. Forward-thinking organizations are creating dynamic learning ecosystems that transcend traditional training approaches. These environments seamlessly blend formal instruction with peer learning and hands-on experience, creating richer, more effective development paths. We're particularly encouraged by organizations forming strategic partnerships with educational institutions and technology providers to accelerate skill development and innovation.

The most successful organizations are also rethinking their approach to career architecture. Traditional linear career paths are giving way to more flexible frameworks that acknowledge the diverse ways people can grow and contribute. This new approach to career development not only better serves employee aspirations but also creates more adaptable organizations capable of responding quickly to changing business needs.

Employee Experience Innovation

Technology has opened new frontiers in personalizing the employee experience, but the key to success lies in how organizations leverage these capabilities. Leading organizations are creating customized employee journeys that reflect individual preferences and career aspirations. These personalized experiences extend from onboarding through development and beyond, creating stronger connections between employees and their work.

What's particularly exciting is how organizations are integrating well-being into their talent management strategies — 88% of respondents to our HR Outlook 2025 Study said addressing all forms of wellness is at least a moderate priority this year; 48% ranked it as their top priority. Rather than treating employee wellness as a separate initiative, forward-thinking organizations are weaving it into the fabric of the employee experience. This holistic approach recognizes that peak performance comes from supporting the whole person, not just their professional development.

Middle Management Renaissance

Middle managers, who for years have often felt caught in a vice between employee needs and management's expectations for productivity and growth, have the opportunity to become transformational leaders. As AI systems handle routine tasks, managers can focus on developing their uniquely human skills. This shift allows them to become coaches, innovators and culture champions. By investing in leadership training and emotional intelligence, organizations can cultivate a new generation of inspiring middle managers.

Culture Development

The shift to remote and hybrid work models opens new avenues for building inclusive, flexible organizational cultures. By reimagining communication strategies, virtual team-building activities and shared digital experiences, companies can create strong, cohesive cultures that transcend physical boundaries and adapt to the evolving needs of their workforce.

CRITICAL
QUESTIONS

As we stare into the future, several critical questions emerge:

- How can HR and talent management departments leverage AI to enhance their strategic value and create more impactful human-centric initiatives?

- In what ways can we integrate AI-driven insights with human expertise to cultivate a more vibrant and inclusive organizational culture?

- What best practices can companies adopt to ensure transparent and ethical use of AI and data analytics in talent management, fostering trust and employee engagement?

- How can organizations create a harmonious work environment where AI-augmented and traditional roles complement each other, maximizing both efficiency and human potential?

- What innovative approaches to continuous learning and development can companies implement to empower employees and drive business growth in a rapidly evolving workplace?

- How can we design a holistic employee experience that not only attracts and retains top talent but also aligns with and enhances our strategic business objectives?

BRANDON HALL GROUP™ POINT OF VIEW

At Brandon Hall Group™, we believe the key to navigating these turbulent waters lies in strategic execution. While the challenges are significant, they are not insurmountable. We advocate the following strategies:

Harness Technology to Amplify Human Potential

The key to successful technology implementation lies not in the tools themselves, but in how they enhance human capabilities and connections. Organizations must develop comprehensive digital enablement strategies that build both confidence and competence across their workforce. This means moving beyond simple tool training to create true digital fluency.

Success in this area requires careful attention to change management and user experience. We've seen organizations achieve remarkable results by taking a human-centric approach to technology implementation. This means involving users in the design process, creating clear feedback loops and ensuring that technology serves to enhance rather than replace human interaction. The most successful organizations create technology adoption roadmaps that align clearly with business objectives while maintaining focus on the human experience.

Bring Performance Management into the 21st Century Already!

Performance management must evolve from an administrative exercise into a dynamic driver of growth and development. The most effective systems we've studied focus on future potential rather than just past performance. This forward-looking approach creates clear connections between current performance and future opportunities, motivating employees while serving organizational needs.

Data plays a crucial role in this transformation, but it's how organizations use this data that makes the difference. Leading organizations are using analytics not just to evaluate performance, but to identify development opportunities and track progress toward goals. They're creating feedback systems that encourage regular dialogue about performance and development, moving away from annual reviews toward more continuous and meaningful conversations. Performance management, and other areas of talent development, will change dramatically in the years ahead. The changes we recommend here is just the beginning.

Engage and Recognize to Retain Top Talent

Smart organizations know that closing talent gaps starts with engaging and retaining the people they already have. You can start by building comprehensive engagement and recognition programs that span the entire employee lifecycle. These programs should focus on providing growth opportunities, fostering a positive work environment and recognizing contributions alongside traditional retention strategies.

Incorporate career development pathways, personalized learning experiences and cross-functional projects into your engagement initiatives. This approach will help employees see a future within your organization, gain diverse experiences and build networks across teams.

Implement a multi-faceted recognition program that includes peer-to-peer appreciation, alignment with company values, and both formal and informal recognition channels. Regularly assess and update your engagement and recognition strategies to ensure they align with the evolving needs of your workforce. This may include placing greater emphasis on work-life balance, mental health support and recognizing contributions in remote or hybrid work environments.

Make Career Development Something Your Employees Brag About

Solving your organization's talent challenges means more than just upskilling employees to meet your future business needs. Your employees should actually enjoy the process (or at least not hate it) and see it as a path to their own personal growth rather than just filling a new hole in the org chart.

If the execution is right, personalized, employee-led career development can be a powerful strategy for engaging your people and filling current or future skill gaps.

In addition, organization-wide upskilling/reskilling strategies have the greatest impact when powered by a personalized blend of technology-enabled learning and human interaction. Make this a central part of your career development strategy by investing judiciously in new technologies that can support your needs. Consider building skills clouds and internal talent markets to make sure you and your people have clear insight into the supply and demand of skills in your organization.

From there, the key is to show employees how their career interests and aspirations overlap with the skill needs of the business. This gives them the autonomy to build and execute clear, flexible career pathways that support the goals of engagement and upskilling. This may involve reimagining traditional career progression models to accommodate a flatter, more agile organizational structure.

Build Engagement That Inspires

Creating sustainable engagement requires a comprehensive approach that connects individual purpose with organizational mission. The most successful organizations we study are those that create clear lines of sight between individual contributions and larger organizational goals. They enable autonomy and decision-making at appropriate levels, creating opportunities for employees to shape their work and their workplace.

Equally important is creating an environment that supports both professional growth and personal well-being. This means providing clear visibility into career opportunities while supporting work-life integration. The organizations leading in this area recognize that engagement isn't about periodic initiatives – it's about creating a consistent experience that demonstrates genuine concern for employee success and well-being.

PREDICTIONS

Every aspect of talent management will change dramatically in the years ahead. The changes we recommend here are just the beginning.

Wearable Tech and ONA-Driven Performance Management Will Become Mainstream

Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) powered by wearable technology will revolutionize performance management. These devices will track interactions, collaboration patterns and even stress levels, providing unprecedented insights into workforce dynamics. This data-driven approach will help reduce manager bias in evaluations and identify high-potential employees based on their network influence. However, it will also raise significant privacy concerns, requiring organizations to balance the benefits of data collection with employee rights and ethical considerations.

AR Technology Will Revolutionize On-the-Job Training

Augmented Reality (AR) will transform workplace training, making it more immersive and effective. Imagine nurses receiving real-time medication reminders or factory workers getting safety procedure prompts through AR glasses. This technology will dramatically reduce errors, increase efficiency and improve compliance. AR will also enable remote experts to guide on-site workers through complex tasks, enhancing knowledge transfer and reducing the need for extensive travel. The result will be faster onboarding, improved performance, and enhanced safety across various industries.

AI Will Take Over Basic Career Development and Coaching Tasks

AI assistants will become integral to career development and coaching processes. These intelligent systems will manage goal tracking, schedule meetings, and even provide basic feedback on performance and skill development. By handling these routine tasks, AI will free up managers to focus on more complex, creative tasks that require uniquely human skills such as empathy, collaboration, conflict resolution and nuanced communication. This shift will allow for more meaningful interactions between managers and employees, fostering deeper relationships and more effective leadership.

Employee AI Twins Will Be Used for Strategic Planning

Organizations will leverage "Employee AI Twins" – digital simulations of individual employees — for strategic workforce planning. These AI models will incorporate an employee's skills, experience, preferences, and potential, allowing organizations to scenario-plan career changes and succession strategies with heightened accuracy. HR teams can use these simulations to test different career paths, identify skill gaps, and optimize talent allocation. This technology will enable more personalized career development and more efficient succession planning, ultimately leading to improved employee satisfaction and organizational performance.

Personal Compliance Bots Will Be Ubiquitous in Regulated Industries

In heavily regulated industries, personal AI "regulatory angels" will become commonplace. These sophisticated bots will provide real-time guidance on complex compliance issues, offering instant advice on regulatory requirements, ethical considerations and best practices. By proactively alerting employees to potential compliance risks and suggesting appropriate actions, these bots will dramatically reduce regulatory violations. This technology can minimize legal and financial risks and empower employees to navigate complex regulatory landscapes with confidence, improving overall operational efficiency.

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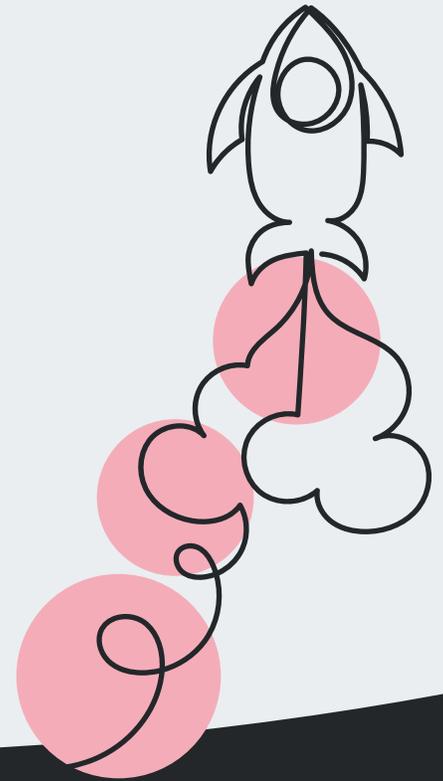
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Empowering Excellence in Organizations Around the World

03

THE FUTURE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:

Cultivating Resilient Digital Collaborators in an AI-Driven World

Organizations are grappling with a multifaceted challenge rooted in the fundamental tension between the rapid pace of technological advancement and the comparatively slow evolution of human skills and organizational cultures

CURRENT
STATE

As organizations grapple with unprecedented technological advancements, global uncertainties and rapidly evolving workplace dynamics, the need for a new breed of leaders has never been more apparent.

Today's leaders must be more than just decision-makers or visionaries; they must be resilient digital collaborators, capable of navigating complex digital ecosystems while fostering human connections in an increasingly virtual world.

The Brandon Hall Group™ leadership development benchmarking research shows that 80% of organizations recognize the need for major changes to their leadership development approaches in the coming year. This statistic underscores a growing awareness that traditional leadership models are no longer sufficient in a world where digital transformation is not just a buzzword, but a daily reality.

How Employers Plan to Improve Leaders' Impact on the Business

Increase focus on developing leaders at all levels, including frontline
71%

Improve identification and development of high-potentials
63%

Improve succession planning
61%

Increase diversity of the leadership pipeline
59%

Increase focus on inclusive leadership
49%

Improve alignment of leadership development strategy with business strategy
46%

Increase the use of data and analytics to measure leadership development impact
46%

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, Igniting the Leadership Spark

The skills required for effective leadership are evolving at breakneck speed. While technical acumen remains important, it's the fusion of digital fluency with human-centric "power skills" that truly defines the modern leader. Emotional intelligence, adaptability, systems thinking and the ability to lead diverse, distributed teams have become non-negotiable competencies.

Yet, many organizations struggle to cultivate these critical capabilities at scale. The challenge lies not just in identifying the right skills to develop, but in creating learning experiences that are as dynamic and interconnected as the digital environments leaders must navigate.

Top Methods Used to Provide Leadership Skills Development Through Practice

Peer learning groups and cohort-based learning
65%

Self-guided learning pathways utilizing microlearning and gamification around specific skills
60%

Executive coaching with an external coach coupled with personal development plan
57%

On-the-job training with supportive feedback, stretch assignments, action learning and rotational programs
55%

Behavioral assessments and personalized development plans
52%

Scenario-based simulations
47%

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, Igniting the Leadership Spark

COMPLICATIONS

The journey to develop resilient digital collaborators is akin to navigating a complex, ever-shifting labyrinth. As organizations strive to equip their leaders with the skills needed for the digital age, they find themselves grappling with a multifaceted challenge that goes beyond simple skill acquisition.

High-Priority Competencies for Professionals Creating Leadership Development Initiatives

75%	67%	64%	64%	64%
Strategic planning and execution	Coaching and mentoring	Business acumen	Collaboration	Change advocacy

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, Igniting the Leadership Spark:

This challenge is rooted in the fundamental tension between the rapid pace of technological advancement and the comparatively slow evolution of human skills and organizational cultures.

At the heart of this tension lies a profound shift in the very nature of leadership. Traditional leadership models, which often emphasized hierarchical decision-making and control, are being upended by the democratizing force of digital technologies.

These technologies are flattening organizations, enabling instantaneous communication across global teams, and empowering employees at all levels with access to information and tools once reserved for top executives.

Leaders must learn to exert influence without relying on positional authority, foster innovation in virtual environments, and make rapid decisions based on an overwhelming influx of data.

This digital transformation of business is not merely a technological shift, but a cultural one. It demands a fundamental reimagining of how work is done, how value is created, and how organizations interact with their stakeholders.

Leaders must not only understand and leverage new technologies, but also guide their organizations through this cultural metamorphosis. This requires a delicate balance of embracing change while preserving core values, leveraging automation while nurturing human potential, and of driving efficiency while fostering creativity and innovation.

Organizations face several specific complications:

AI implementation hurdles:

While AI promises to revolutionize leadership development, many organizations struggle with its implementation. About half of organizations surveyed are not yet using AI for leadership development. The complexity of AI systems, coupled with concerns about data privacy and ethical use, creates significant barriers to adoption. Learning and development professionals often lack the technical expertise to effectively leverage AI, leading to a widening skills gap within L&D teams themselves.

Digital literacy gap:

Many current and aspiring leaders lack the deep digital literacy required to lead in a technology-driven world. This gap extends beyond mere familiarity with digital tools to a fundamental understanding of how technology reshapes business models, customer experiences, and organizational cultures.
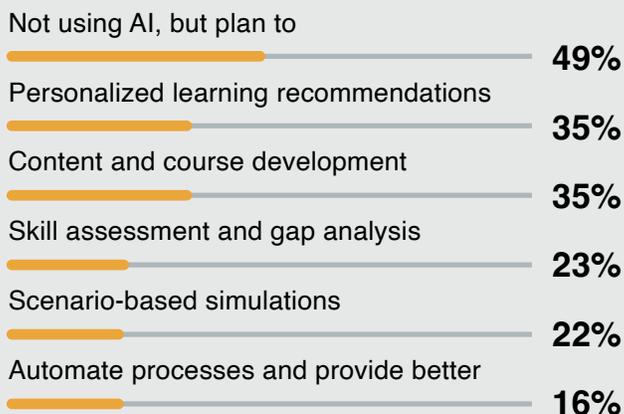
Integration with existing systems:

Many organizations have significant investments in legacy learning management systems and talent management platforms. Integrating cutting-edge AI technologies with these existing systems can be technically challenging and expensive, creating a barrier to holistic, AI-enabled leadership development ecosystems.

Rapid technological evolution:

The pace of technological change outstrips most organizations' ability to adapt their leadership development programs. By the time a new digital leadership competency is identified and incorporated into development initiatives, it may already be outdated.

How Organizations Use, or Plan to Use, AI for Leadership Development

Not using AI, but plan to
49%

Personalized learning recommendations
35%

Content and course development
35%

Skill assessment and gap analysis
23%

Scenario-based simulations
22%

Automate processes and provide better
16%

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, Igniting the Leadership Spark

Virtual leadership challenges:

The shift to remote and hybrid work models has created new challenges in building trust, fostering collaboration, and maintaining team cohesion. Many leaders struggle to translate their in-person leadership skills to virtual environments effectively.

Ethical considerations:

The use of AI in leadership development raises complex ethical questions. How much should AI influence decisions about a leader's career trajectory? What are the implications of using AI to deeply analyze a leader's behaviors and potential? These ethical dilemmas are further complicated by the "black box" nature of many AI algorithms.

Balancing human and digital:

As AI and automation become more prevalent, leaders must learn to strike a delicate balance between leveraging technology and preserving the human elements of leadership. There's a risk of over-relying on digital solutions at the expense of emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills.

IMPLICATIONS

The complications surrounding the development of resilient digital collaborators cast a long shadow over the future of organizations and work itself. We stand at the cusp of a leadership paradigm shift, one that will redefine how leaders are developed and what leadership means in the digital age.

This shift is likely to create a new form of digital divide between organizations that can successfully cultivate digitally savvy, resilient leaders and those that cannot. The implications of this divide are profound and far-reaching, touching every aspect of organizational performance and sustainability.

In the near future, we may see a redefinition of organizational hierarchies and power structures. As digital technologies continue to democratize access to information and decision-making tools, traditional top-down leadership models may give way to more fluid, network-based structures. Leaders will increasingly be valued for their capacity to connect, collaborate, and catalyze collective intelligence across digital networks.

How Organizations Prioritize Developing Leaders

1 **Senior leaders**
(AVP, VP, SVP, etc.)

2 **Mid-level leaders**
(Directors)

3 **Frontline leaders**
(Supervisors/managers)

4 **Executives**
(C-suite)

5 **Individual contributions**
(Preparing for first leadership roles)

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, Igniting the Leadership Spark
Rank based on weighted ranking with 5 points for a #1 ranking and 1 point for a #5 ranking.

The rise of AI and machine learning is likely to fundamentally alter the role of leaders in decision-making processes. As AI systems become more sophisticated in analyzing data and predicting outcomes, leaders will need to develop new skills in framing problems, asking the right questions, and providing the human judgment and ethical considerations that AI lacks. This human-AI symbiosis in leadership will require a reimagining of leadership development approaches, blending technical skills with uniquely human capabilities like empathy, creativity, and ethical reasoning.

Projected Impact of AI on Leadership Development in 2025
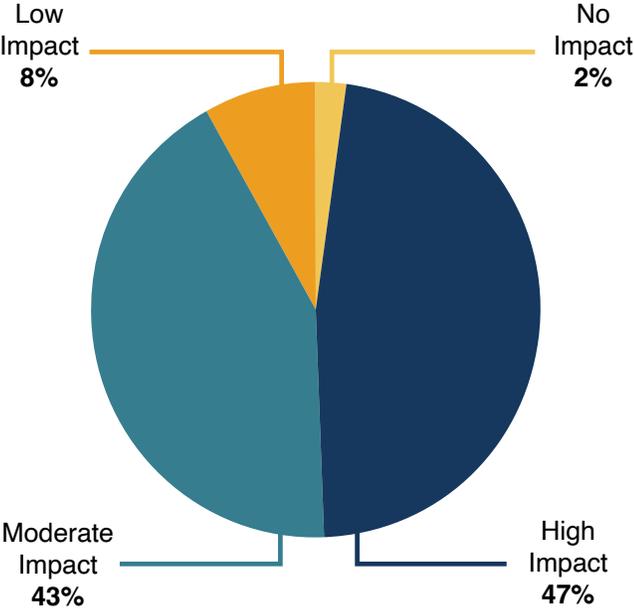
Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, HR Outlook 2025

The implications of these shifts are numerous and significant:

Widening leadership capability gap: Organizations that successfully leverage AI for leadership development may pull ahead rapidly, creating a widening capability gap. Leaders developed in AI-enhanced programs are likely to be more adaptive, better at leveraging data for decision-making, and more attuned to emerging trends. This could create a two-tiered leadership landscape, with AI-savvy leaders significantly outperforming their peers.

Shift in L&D roles: The rise of AI in leadership development will necessitate a fundamental shift in the roles of L&D professionals. There will be an increasing need for "AI translators" who can bridge the gap between technical AI capabilities and leadership development needs. L&D teams may need to upskill rapidly in data science and AI to remain relevant and effective.

Personalization at scale: AI has the potential to deliver truly personalized leadership development at a scale previously unimaginable. This could democratize access to high-quality leadership development, allowing organizations to extend development opportunities far beyond the traditional high-potential pool.

Ethical leadership in the AI era: As AI becomes more prevalent in business decision-making, there's an emerging need for leaders who can navigate the ethical implications of AI. Leadership development programs will need to evolve to cultivate leaders who can balance the efficiencies of AI with ethical considerations and human values.

Continuous, AI-driven learning: The traditional model of episodic leadership training will likely give way to continuous, AI-driven learning experiences. AI could provide real-time feedback and development suggestions based on a leader's day-to-day behaviors and decisions, accelerating leadership development dramatically.

Redefining leadership potential: AI's ability to analyze vast amounts of data and identify subtle patterns could lead to a redefinition of leadership potential. Traditional markers of potential may be supplemented or replaced by AI-identified traits and behaviors, potentially leading to more diverse leadership pipelines.

Emergence of human-AI collaboration in leadership: As AI systems become more sophisticated, successful leaders will be those who can effectively collaborate with AI, leveraging its strengths while providing the human judgment and emotional intelligence that AI lacks.

CRITICAL
QUESTIONS

To chart a path forward, organizations must grapple with several critical questions:

- How can we create leadership development experiences that mirror the complexity and interconnectedness of digital ecosystems?

- What role should AI play in identifying, developing, and supporting resilient digital collaborators?

- How do we cultivate leaders who can effectively balance technological leverage with human-centric leadership?

- What metrics should we use to measure digital leadership effectiveness in a rapidly changing environment?

- How can we ensure our leadership development approaches are agile enough to keep pace with technological change?

- What ethical frameworks do we need to incorporate into our leadership development to prepare leaders for the moral challenges of the digital age?

- How do we develop leaders who can foster innovation and creativity in human-AI hybrid teams?

BRANDON HALL GROUP™ POINT OF VIEW

The future of leadership development lies at the intersection of technology, human potential, and organizational transformation. To cultivate the resilient digital collaborators needed for tomorrow's business landscape, organizations must embrace a holistic, multifaceted approach that goes beyond traditional skill-based training.

Central to this approach is the concept of vertical development -- the process of expanding leaders' mindsets and worldviews to build their capacity for navigating increasing complexity. Unlike horizontal development, which focuses on adding new skills and knowledge, vertical development aims to transform how leaders think, enhancing their ability to make sense of and respond to complex, ambiguous situations.

In the context of digital transformation and AI integration, vertical development becomes even more critical.

Leaders must not only learn to use new technologies but also develop the cognitive and emotional capacity to grapple with the ethical, strategic, and human implications of these technologies. This requires a fundamental shift in how we approach leadership development.

Embrace Complexity

Rather than simplifying leadership challenges, development programs should expose leaders to the full complexity of the digital ecosystem. This means creating learning experiences that mirror the interconnected, fast-paced nature of today's business environment, pushing leaders to expand their mental models and decision-making capabilities.

Integrate Technology and Humanity

Leadership development must balance technological proficiency with uniquely human skills. Programs should focus on developing leaders who can leverage AI and digital tools while also cultivating empathy, ethical reasoning, and the ability to inspire and connect with diverse teams.

Foster Adaptive Learning

The ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn is crucial. Development initiatives should prioritize meta-learning skills, helping leaders become more adaptable and resilient in the face of constant change.

As organizations become more interconnected and digitally driven, leaders need to develop a systems perspective. This involves understanding the ripple effects of decisions across complex networks and ecosystems, both within and beyond organizational boundaries.

Prioritize Ethical Leadership

With the rise of AI and big data, ethical considerations are more important than ever. Leadership development must incorporate robust frameworks for ethical decision-making, preparing leaders to navigate the moral complexities of the digital age.
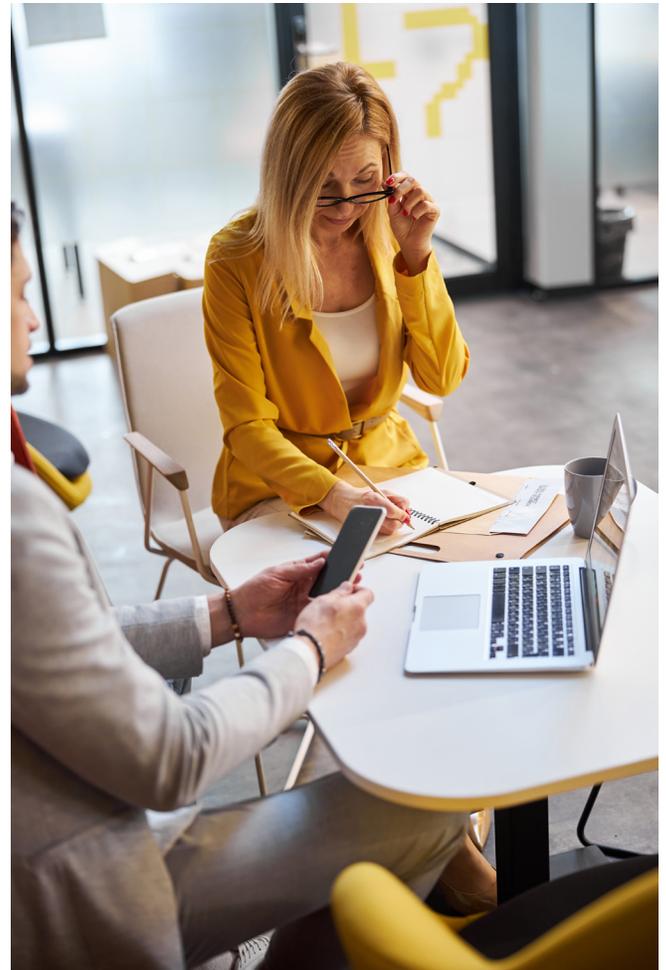
Democratize Leadership Development

As hierarchies flatten and work becomes more distributed, leadership skills are needed at all levels of the organization. Development programs should be accessible and relevant to a broader range of employees, fostering a culture of shared leadership.

Embrace Continuous Development

Leadership development should be viewed as an ongoing journey rather than a series of discrete events. Organizations need to create ecosystems that support continuous learning and reflection, allowing leaders to evolve alongside their rapidly changing environments.

Leverage Experiential Learning

To truly develop vertical capabilities, leaders need opportunities to apply their learning in real-world contexts. This involves immersive simulations, stretch assignments, or cross-functional projects that challenge leaders to operate outside their comfort zones.

By adopting these principles, organizations can create leadership development approaches that expand the capacity to lead in increasingly complex, digitally-driven environments. This vertical development approach, combined with strategic use of AI and other technologies, will be key to cultivating the resilient digital collaborators needed to drive organizations forward.

The organizations that successfully implement these strategies will be better positioned to navigate the challenges of digital transformation, leverage the potential of AI, and foster the human connections and innovation needed to thrive in an uncertain future. As we move forward, the ability to develop these types of leaders will become a critical differentiator, separating the organizations that merely survive from those that truly thrive in the digital age.

PREDICTIONS

AI-Powered Leadership Simulations Will Become the Norm

AI-powered simulations will become the norm, offering a safe and cost-effective way for leaders to practice and refine their skills in high-stakes situations, without real-world consequences. These simulations will go beyond simple role-playing, utilizing advanced algorithms to create dynamic scenarios that respond to a leader's decisions in real time. AI will also provide personalized feedback and insights, helping leaders identify areas for improvement and tailor their development journey. This shift toward simulations will make leadership development more accessible and scalable across organizations, regardless of geographical location or level.

High-Potential Identification and Development Will Be AI-Driven

AI's ability to analyze vast amounts of data will transform how organizations identify and develop high-potential talent. AI algorithms will sift through performance reviews, project outcomes, learning histories, and even social network interactions to spot patterns and predict future potential. This approach will reduce bias and subjectivity in talent identification, ensuring that all employees have equal opportunities to advance. AI will also personalize development plans for high-potentials, recommending relevant training, stretch assignments, and mentorships. However, leaders must still be involved in high-potential identification and development, but the tedious, time-consuming work will be done for them, freeing them to make critical decisions based on strong data.

AI-Powered Leadership Coaching Will Emerge

AI-driven coaching platforms will provide personalized guidance and support at scale, supplementing human coaches. These platforms will leverage natural language processing and machine learning to analyze a leader's strengths, weaknesses, and development goals. They'll then offer tailored recommendations, feedback, and learning resources. This accessibility will democratize leadership development, allowing individuals at all levels to benefit from ongoing coaching support. Human coaches will play a crucial role in interpreting AI insights, providing emotional support, and facilitating deep reflection.

Development Will Include AI-Generated Leadership Personas

AI-generated personas will serve as virtual role models, allowing leaders to observe and emulate different leadership styles. These personas will be based on extensive data analysis of successful leaders across various industries and contexts. Leaders will be able to interact with these personas in simulated environments, experiment with different approaches, and receive feedback on their performance. This exposure to diverse leadership styles will broaden a leader's toolkit and enhance their adaptability in complex situations.

Leaders Must Master Hybrid Human-AI Teams

Leaders will increasingly collaborate with AI-powered tools to streamline administrative tasks, freeing up more time for strategic thinking and team development. AI will automate routine activities like scheduling, data analysis, and report generation. This will enable leaders to focus on fostering creativity, innovation, and collaboration within their teams. AI will also provide real-time insights into team dynamics and individual performance, helping leaders identify and address potential issues proactively.

04

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION:

A Holistic Focus on Inclusion and Equity is Needed to Stabilize the Workforce and Drive Innovation

The consequences of inaction can be both immediate and long-lasting, affecting the internal dynamics of the organization and its external relationships and overall performance in the marketplace

CURRENT STATE

The focus on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) has faced significant challenges, including sociopolitical backlash and uncertainty among leaders, while structural and systemic barriers to equity remain deeply entrenched.

The current state of DEI is one of progress mixed with persistent challenges. While awareness and commitment to DEI have increased in about one-half of organizations over the past two years, according to Brandon Hall Group™ research, translating this into lasting, systemic change remains a work in progress.

As organizations have felt headwinds against DEI, traditional approaches (e.g., improving equity in recruitment, pay and career advancement and expanded development of people in under-represented groups) have given way to building a culture of psychological safety and belonging.

As Brandon Hall Group™ research shows, organizations are twice as likely to focus on psychological safety and belonging than on improving equity of opportunity for under-represented groups.

Top Business Priorities for DEI in 2025

Build a culture of psychological safety and belonging
60%

Focus on inclusive leadership
45%

Improve alignment of DEI strategy with business objectives
40%

Embed the values of DEI across the organization
39%

Improve equity of opportunity in recruitment, pay and advancement
31%

Increase the focus on intersectionality
23%

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, HR Outlook 2025

The research also shows that while some DEI progress has been made, significant gaps remain:

49%
of organizations report improved diversity in new hires.

45%
say individuals treat different ideas and opinions with respect.

27%
believe managers consistently demonstrate commitment to DEI principles.

45%
report that their leadership team's diversity reflects the workforce composition.

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, Improving the Business Impact of DEI

These statistics highlight the disconnect between intention and impact in many DEI efforts. Organizations often struggle with several key obstacles:

◆ **Lack of accountability:**
DEI goals are frequently not tied to business objectives or leadership performance reviews.

◆ **Narrow recruitment approaches:**
Relying on closed talent networks perpetuates homogeneous workforces.

◆ **Biased talent management processes:**
Performance reviews and promotion criteria often disadvantage minorities.

◆ **Exclusive cultural norms:**
Exclusive corporate cultures drive turnover among underrepresented groups.

◆ **Lack of diversity in leadership:**
The absence of diverse role models at senior levels hampers retention and advancement of underrepresented groups.

Many companies have focused predominantly on awareness and training rather than building an organization-wide strategy and embedding the principles of DEI across the enterprise and fully understanding intersectionality and the full range of human diversity. This approach has limited the potential for true transformation and sustainable change.

COMPLEXITIES

The journey toward a more inclusive and equitable work culture requires a deep understanding of intersectionality, systemic barriers and the nuanced experiences of different groups within the organization.

Intersectionality recognizes that various dimensions of diversity, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, disability and more, do not exist in isolation. They intersect and interact to create unique lived experiences for each individual. To truly create an inclusive and equitable workplace, organizations must embrace intersectionality and multiple identities, and take a holistic and nuanced approach to DEI that recognizes and values the full range of human diversity.

This requires a deep understanding of the unique experiences, challenges and strengths of employees but also the systems and processes in place for hiring, development, compensation, advancement, engagement and more.

That complexity creates opportunities for AI and other advanced technologies to facilitate deeper understanding and change. AI can be a powerful tool for identifying biases, promoting fair practices and fostering an inclusive culture. However, only 8% of organizations believe AI will have a high impact on DEI in 2025 (see graphic at right).

Where Will AI Have a High Impact on HR in 2025?

58% Learning and Development

43% Talent Acquisition

29% Talent Management

23% Leadership Development

16% Human Resources

8% Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, HR Outlook 2025

While leveraging advanced technologies must be done ethically and strategically and come with some risks that must be mitigated, the potential for AI to help organizations overcome systemic barriers to inclusion and equity is immense. For example:

AI-powered job description analysis: Tools can analyze job descriptions for biased language and suggest more inclusive alternatives.

Data-driven performance metrics: AI can analyze multiple data points to provide a more comprehensive and objective view of employee performance.

Bias detection in reviews: Natural Language Processing (NLP) can identify potentially biased language in performance reviews.

Fair promotion recommendations: AI systems can recommend promotions based on skills and performance data, potentially reducing the impact of unconscious biases.

Fair compensation modeling: Machine learning models can suggest fair compensation packages based on role, experience and performance without regard to gender, race or other protected characteristics.

Inclusive language tools: AI-powered writing assistants can suggest more inclusive language in emails, documents, and other communications.

Accessibility features: Advanced technologies can provide real-time captioning, translation or other accessibility features to make communications more inclusive.

Sentiment analysis: AI can analyze company-wide communications to gauge overall sentiment and identify potential inclusivity issues.

Inclusion metrics: Advanced analytics can combine various data points (survey responses, promotion rates, retention data, etc.) to create comprehensive inclusion metrics.

Predictive analytics: AI can identify trends and predict potential future inclusion issues, allowing for proactive interventions.

Real-time feedback systems: AI-powered platforms can gather and analyze continuous feedback on the employee experience, providing up-to-date insights on inclusion efforts.

The evidence shows that many organizations struggle with inclusion and equity without tools to overcome inertia and challenges.

DEI Progress in the Organization Over the Past 1-2 Years

"The culture of the organization overall is more inclusive."

15% Strongly Disagree

20% Somewhat Disagree

20% Neither Agree or Disagree

20% Strongly Agree

25% Somewhat Agree

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, Improving the Business Impact of DEI

IMPLICATIONS

Organizations that fail to effectively address inclusion and equity in the workplace face significant risks.

The repercussions of neglecting these crucial aspects of organizational culture extend far beyond mere compliance issues or public relations concerns. They can profoundly impact every facet of a company's operations, from talent acquisition and retention to innovation and market competitiveness. The consequences of inaction or inadequate measures can be both immediate and long-lasting, affecting not only the internal dynamics of the organization but also its external relationships and overall performance in the marketplace.

Understanding these potential outcomes is critical for leaders seeking to build resilient, high-performing organizations in an increasingly diverse and globally connected world. Failure to effectively address inclusion and equity can have significant consequences for organizations. They include:

Reduced innovation: Lack of diversity leads to groupthink and less creative problem-solving, hindering innovation and adaptability in a rapidly changing business environment.

Reputational risks: Companies perceived as non-inclusive face potential backlash from customers, partners, and investors who increasingly prioritize social responsibility.

Talent shortages: In a competitive labor market, organizations that fail to create inclusive environments will struggle to attract and retain top talent, particularly from underrepresented groups.

Missed market opportunities: Lack of diverse perspectives can result in products and services that don't resonate with a broad customer base, limiting market reach and growth potential.

Decreased employee engagement: When employees don't feel valued or included, engagement suffers, leading to lower productivity and higher turnover rates.

Reduced organizational resilience: Homogeneous teams are less equipped to navigate complex, global challenges, making the organization less resilient in the face of change.

CRITICAL
QUESTIONS

To shape a more inclusive and equitable culture, employers must grapple with several critical questions:

- How can we evolve our approach to DEI to focus more holistically on equity, inclusion and belonging for all employees?

- What strategies can we employ to ensure that inclusion and equity are truly embedded in our organizational culture and business practices, rather than treated as a separate initiative?

- How can we leverage advanced technologies, including AI and virtual reality, to enhance our efforts and create more empathetic, inclusive environments?

- How can we address intersectionality and the complex, multidimensional nature of diversity in our workforce?

- What role should leadership play in driving inclusion and equity, and how can we ensure accountability at all levels of the organization?

- What strategies can we employ to build a strong network of allies and advocates for DEI across the organization?

- How can we adapt our strategies to be effective across different cultural contexts in a global organization?

- What metrics and analytics should we use to measure the impact of DEI on business outcomes, employee experience, and innovation?

BRANDON HALL GROUP™ POINT OF VIEW

By adopting the following strategies, organizations can create a truly inclusive environment that attracts and retains diverse talent and unleashes the full innovative potential of their workforce:

Reframe DEI to Accentuate Inclusion and Belonging

Position DEI not as a compliance issue or moral imperative, but as a critical business strategy that drives innovation, market relevance and competitive advantage. Organizations should consider a shift in focus to equity, inclusion, intersectionality and belonging and ensuring everyone has the resources and opportunities to succeed, regardless of background. This could involve significant changes to company policies and practices.

Implement Accountability at All Levels

Integrate DEI metrics into leadership performance evaluations and compensation structures. Establish clear goals and regularly report on progress to ensure sustained focus and effort.

Leverage Technology for Inclusive Practices

Utilize AI and machine learning to mitigate bias in hiring, promotion, and daily interactions. Implement tools that support diverse communication styles and needs, such as real-time translation and accessibility features.

Implement Data-Driven DEI Strategies

Invest in advanced analytics capabilities to measure the impact of DEI initiatives on key business metrics, employee experience and innovation outcomes. Use these insights to continually refine and improve DEI strategies.

Create a Network of Inclusion and Belonging Champions

Build a robust network of allies and advocates across the organization who can drive change at all levels. Provide training and resources to empower these champions to model inclusive behaviors and challenge bias effectively.

Foster Inclusive Innovation Practices

Implement processes that actively seek out and incorporate diverse perspectives in product development, market strategy, and problem-solving. Create cross-functional, diverse teams to tackle key business challenges.

Prioritize Cultural Competence

Provide ongoing training and resources to develop cultural intelligence across the organization, enabling employees to navigate global markets and diverse teams effectively.

PREDICTIONS

Here are the developments that could significantly impact DEI in the months and years ahead:

Evolution From DEI to EIBI

Organizations will shift their focus to equity, inclusion, intersectionality and belonging (EIBI) to ensure everyone has the resources and opportunities to succeed, regardless of background. This could involve significant changes to company policies and practices.

Gamified Allyship Programs Will Increase

You will see the development and adoption of interactive, game-like systems that encourage and reward inclusive behaviors and allyship throughout the organization.

Virtual Reality for Empathy Building

Companies will leverage VR to allow employees to experience the world from the perspective of someone with a different background, fostering empathy and understanding.

AI Diversity Recruiting Agents

Organizations will begin to adopt AI systems that proactively identify and engage diverse talent, using advanced matching algorithms that focus on skills and potential rather than traditional credentials.

Culturally Adaptive AI Assistants

AI tools that adjust their communication style, recommendations and support based on employees' cultural backgrounds and preferences will begin to be used to keep interactions consistently inclusive.

Quantum-Computing-Powered Intersectionality Analysis

In the years ahead, employers will use quantum computing to analyze complex, multidimensional diversity data to uncover hidden patterns and inform more nuanced inclusion.

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TAKE ASSESSMENT

A New Chapter in Innovation

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At this iconic location where innovation meets excellence, we're launching an exciting series of professional development and learning opportunities.

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05

HR'S JOURNEY TO FUTURE READINESS

The Path Forward Requires New Skills and Priorities

Leading organizations are already leveraging advanced technologies, not just to improve efficiency, but to enhance the human aspects of HR

CURRENT STATE

As 2025 begins, Human Resources (HR) stands at the threshold of an extraordinary transformation. Organizations are beginning to make strides in reimagining HR as a strategic powerhouse, driven by data-informed decisions, people-centric policies and increased transparency. This evolution positions HR to become a more vital force in driving organizational success and employee flourishing.

Brandon Hall Group™ research data shows that about three-quarters of organizations believe their HR teams are completely or mostly ready to handle current business needs. However, 63% said the same for the ability to meet future business needs.

Perceived HR Readiness for Current and Future Business Requirements

	Current Needs	Future Needs
Completely ready	26%	29%
Mostly ready	48%	34%
Somewhat ready	25%	31%
Not ready	1%	5%

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, HR Outlook 2025

So, future readiness is a continuing journey, the research shows, and at least half of organizations surveyed indicated HR team members must prioritize upskilling in the following areas:

Priorities for HR Team Upskilling Over the Next 12 Months

62% Strategic planning and execution

60% Coaching/ mentoring

60% Learning agility

57% Leadership/ change advocacy

51% Collaboration

50% Data Science
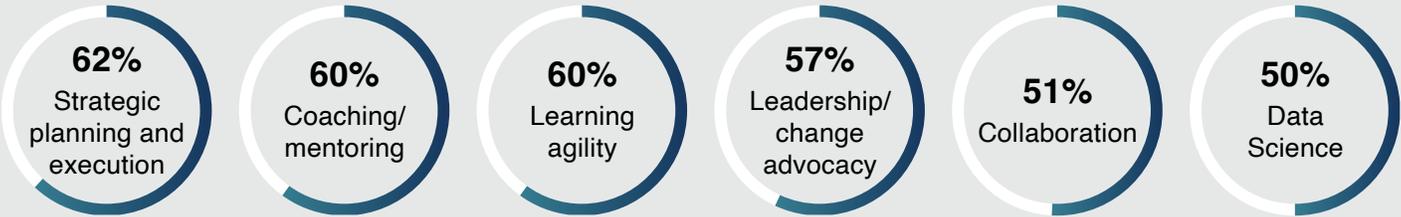
Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, The HR Playbook

This approach to future readiness reflects a fundamental shift in how HR operates and delivers value to organizations. We're seeing HR departments transform from traditional administrative functions into strategic business partners that drive organizational performance through people-centered initiatives and data-driven decision-making.

HR professionals surveyed indicated the reasons for the evolution are many:

|			
Greater need for people analytics	**65%**	Increased workforce diversity	**55%**
Increased workforce globalization	**59%**	Increased workforce mobilization	**48%**
Greater need for advanced technology support	**58%**	Changing compliance/regulatory conditions	**46%**
Changing business conditions	**56%**	The move to more of a gig economy	**30%**

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, The HR Playbook

In progressive organizations, change is prioritized in a few key areas:

◆ **Data-driven decision-making:** Leading organizations have moved beyond basic HR metrics to sophisticated, AI-driven people analytics that provide unprecedented insights into workforce dynamics and organizational health. These analytics capabilities allow HR leaders to make more informed decisions about workforce planning, talent development and organizational design. For example, some organizations are using predictive analytics to identify flight risks among high-performing employees and proactively address retention concerns.

◆ **Employee value proposition (EVP):** Forward-thinking companies are fundamentally redesigning their EVP to reflect changing workforce expectations and needs. This goes far beyond traditional compensation and benefits to encompass meaningful work, career growth opportunities, workplace flexibility and comprehensive well-being support. Organizations are creating personalized employee experiences that recognize the diverse needs and aspirations of their workforce, leading to higher engagement and retention.

◆ **Holistic well-being:** Progressive organizations have expanded their view of employee well-being to encompass physical, mental, emotional and financial health. This recognizes that employee performance and engagement are intrinsically linked to overall well-being. Companies are implementing innovative programs such as mental health coaching, financial wellness education and flexible work arrangements that truly support work-life integration.

COMPLEXITIES

The journey toward future-readiness presents opportunities for innovation and growth. The highest priority, according to Brandon Hall Group™'s HR Outlook 2025 and HR Playbook studies, is improving the alignment between HR strategy and business objectives. Approximately the same percentage of organizations say there is no alignment as indicates there is complete alignment.

Degree of Alignment Between HR Strategy and Business Objectives

Not at all aligned **15%**

Completely aligned **14%**

Somewhat aligned **32%**

Mostly aligned **39%**
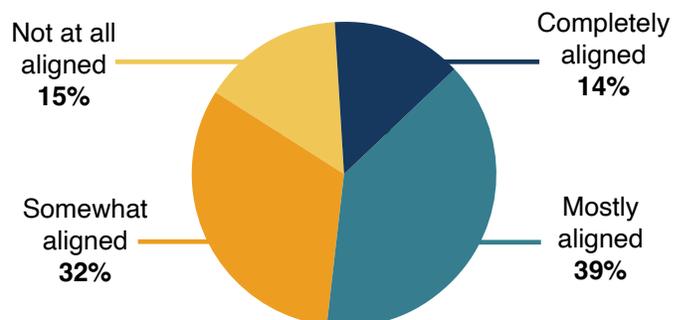
Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, The HR Playbook

Since the North Star is complete alignment, the challenge is significant. However, leading organizations are turning this challenge into an advantage by developing sophisticated analytics capabilities that directly link HR initiatives to business performance. They're creating integrated dashboards that connect workforce metrics to key business KPIs, allowing them to demonstrate HR's impact on organizational success.

The evolution of AI and automation in HR processes represents another frontier of opportunity — 47% of organizations surveyed said integrating AI and automation for HR processes is a high priority in 2025.

Progressive organizations are already leveraging these technologies not just to improve efficiency, but to enhance the human aspects of HR:

- AI-powered recruitment tools are helping eliminate bias and identify candidates who might have been overlooked by traditional screening processes.

- Predictive analytics are enabling more proactive approaches to employee engagement and retention.

- Most importantly, automation of routine tasks can free HR professionals to focus on strategic initiatives that align with organizational objectives and drive business value.

IMPLICATIONS

The transformation of HR carries significant implications for organizational success that extend far beyond the HR function itself. Organizations that successfully embrace this transformation are seeing remarkable results in several key areas:

Strategic Impact

HR leaders must deeply understand their organization's business strategy and market position. It involves identifying key performance indicators that meaningfully connect people initiatives to business outcomes. For example, how do learning and development programs directly impact product innovation? How does employee engagement affect customer satisfaction? The answers to these questions can help HR teams design initiatives that directly support business success.

Enhanced analytical capabilities enable better alignment between people strategies and business objectives. This allows organizations to be more proactive in workforce planning, more effective in talent development and more agile in responding to market changes. For example, one global technology company reported a 20% improvement in its ability to meet staffing needs for critical projects after implementing predictive workforce planning tools.

Employee Experience

As the competition for talent intensifies, organizations must continuously evolve their EVP to meet changing workforce expectations. This involves understanding what truly matters to different employee segments and creating compelling experiences that address those needs. Consider, for example, how hybrid work policies, career development opportunities and well-being programs can be tailored to different employee populations while maintaining equity and inclusion.

For instance, organizations that have adopted comprehensive well-being strategies are seeing significant improvements in employee engagement and retention. A holistic approach to employee well-being, combined with meaningful career development opportunities and flexible work arrangements, can create work environments where people can truly thrive. This enhanced employee experience is a key differentiator in the competition for talent.

Organizational Performance

The combination of data-driven decision-making, enhanced employee experience, and strategic HR leadership is driving improved business outcomes. Organizations that employ a diversified approach report higher levels of innovation, increased adaptability to change and stronger competitive positioning in their markets.

As business environments become more dynamic, reactive workforce planning is no longer sufficient. Organizations need to anticipate future skill requirements, identify potential talent gaps and understand how emerging technologies might affect workforce needs.

The key isn't just to implement technology, but understanding how to use it strategically. Organizations should identify which decisions would benefit most from data-driven insights and how to build the capabilities to generate and act on those insights. This might involve creating cross-functional teams that combine HR expertise with data science skills, or developing partnerships with technology providers who can help accelerate analytics capabilities.

The key to future HR success is to determine organizational priorities and then act in ways that will make HR a strategic partner in achieving business goals. For example, the truly future-ready HR department:

Won't just talk about being data-driven; it will have data scientists and AI specialists on staff, working alongside HR generalists to create predictive models that anticipate employee needs before they arise.

Will work collaboratively across functions to redesign entire organizational structures around human flourishing, recognizing that employee well-being is not just a nice-to-have but a critical driver of innovation and productivity.

Will embrace openness, even when it's uncomfortable, recognizing that trust is the foundation of any truly high-performing organization.

CRITICAL
QUESTIONS

Forward-thinking HR leaders should consider several strategic questions as they navigate their transformation journey. These questions serve as guideposts for strategic planning and development.

- How can we better align our HR strategy with overall business objectives?

- What opportunities exist to enhance our employee value proposition?

- How can we leverage AI and analytics to drive better decision-making?

- How can we build more predictive capabilities into our workforce planning?

- What opportunities exist to enhance our employee value proposition?

- How can we ensure our HR function remains agile and adaptable?
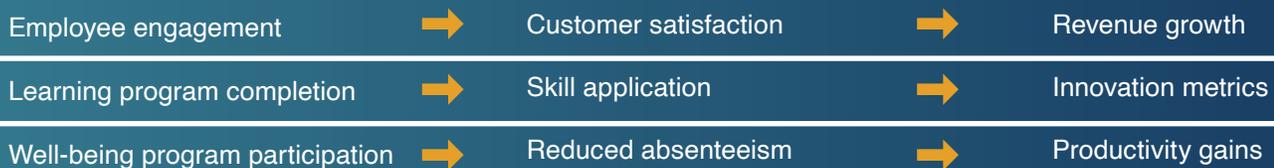
BRANDON HALL GROUP™ POINT OF VIEW

The path to future readiness requires a bold vision and systematic approach. Our research and experience working with leading organizations have identified several key areas where focused effort can yield significant results. These areas directly address the critical questions facing HR leaders today:

Drive Strategic Alignment Through Data

The future belongs to HR teams that master the art and science of people analytics while maintaining clear alignment with business objectives. This alignment requires more than just collecting data — it demands a sophisticated understanding of how people metrics connect to business outcomes.

Leading organizations are achieving this alignment through integrated analytics teams that combine HR expertise with data science skills. For example, a global technology firm created a "People Analytics Center of Excellence" that partners directly with business unit leaders to identify key performance indicators that matter most to their operations. This team developed dashboards that connect employee engagement metrics directly to customer satisfaction scores and sales performance, allowing them to demonstrate clear ROI for HR initiatives.

The key to success in this area is creating what we call "strategic metric chains" – clear links between HR metrics and business outcomes. For instance:

Employee engagement	➡	Customer satisfaction	➡	Revenue growth
Learning program completion	➡	Skill application	➡	Innovation metrics
Well-being program participation	➡	Reduced absenteeism	➡	Productivity gains

Build a Comprehensive Well-Being Strategy

Future-ready organizations recognize that employee well-being is fundamental to business success. This requires moving beyond traditional wellness programs to create an integrated approach that addresses all aspects of employee health and well-being.

This comprehensive approach could include:

- Mental health support through on-demand counseling services and manager training on mental health awareness.

- Financial well-being programs including personalized financial coaching and emergency savings support.

- Physical health initiatives that go beyond typical fitness programs to include ergonomic work environments for both office and remote workers.

- Social well-being support through structured mentoring and community building programs.

Embrace AI Integration and Automation

The strategic integration of AI and automation represents one of the most significant opportunities for HR transformation. Success in this area requires a thoughtful approach that focuses on enhancing rather than replacing human capabilities.

We see a future of what we can "augmented HR," where AI systems work alongside HR professionals to enhance decision-making. This approach can lead to:

- AI-powered recruitment tools that eliminate bias in job descriptions and candidate screening.

- Predictive analytics for identifying flight risks and suggesting retention strategies.

- Automated performance feedback analysis that identifies patterns and suggests development opportunities.

- Natural language processing for analyzing employee sentiment in surveys and social media.

The key to success is maintaining a balance between automation and human judgment. AI handles data analysis and pattern recognition, while HR professionals focus on strategy, relationship building and complex decision-making.

Enable Predictive Workforce Planning

Future-ready organizations use advanced analytics to anticipate and prepare for workforce needs. So much can be accomplished simply by having the know-how to combine multiple data sources to predict future talent needs. For example:

- Market trend analysis to identify emerging skills requirements.

- Demographic data to anticipate retirement patterns.

- Technology adoption curves to predict changes in job roles.

- Economic indicators to forecast hiring needs.

Create an Enhanced EVP

A compelling EVP is crucial for attracting and retaining top talent, but it must be authentic and sustainable. Organizations are moving beyond traditional compensation and benefits to create holistic value propositions that address the full spectrum of employee needs and aspirations.

An employer could, for example, create "experience zones" that cater to different employee segments while maintaining equity. This approach includes:

- Flexible work arrangements tailored to different roles and life stages.

- Personalized development pathways aligned with individual career goals.

- Purpose-driven projects that connect individual work to company impact.

- Community involvement opportunities that align with employee values.

Build Agile HR Operations

To remain adaptable in a rapidly changing environment, HR functions must embed agility into their operational DNA. This requires working across functions to build teams that can respond to rapidly changing business needs. These teams could combine HR generalists, specialists, data analysts and business partners who work together on specific challenges or opportunities. The structure allows for:

- Rapid response to emerging needs.

- Quick experimentation with new approaches.

- Fast scaling of successful initiatives.

- Continuous learning and adaptation.

This approach has reduced time-to-implement for new HR initiatives while breaking down silos between HR and the rest of the organization and improving satisfaction with HR-driven services.

PREDICTIONS

These predictions represent a paradigm shift in how HR operates, moving from a reactive, process-oriented function to a proactive, strategic force within organizations. The HR department of the not-too-distant future could be at the forefront of shaping the future of work, leveraging cutting-edge technologies and scientific insights to create workplaces that are not just efficient, but truly human-centric and adaptable to an ever-changing world.

AI-Human Hybrid Strategy Teams Will Emerge

In the near future, leading HR departments will have fully integrated AI systems into their strategic planning processes. These AI partners will not just crunch numbers but will actively participate in decision-making, offering insights and challenging human assumptions. This hybrid approach will combine the processing power and pattern recognition capabilities of AI with the creativity, emotional intelligence and ethical reasoning of human HR professionals.

Neuroplasticity-Based Organizational Design

Drawing on advances in neuroscience, forward-thinking HR departments will redesign organizational structures to maximize collective cognitive flexibility and innovation. This approach will involve creating dynamic team formations that adapt in real-time to challenges, fostering cross-functional collaboration and implementing work practices that enhance neural connectivity and cognitive performance.

Predicting Cultural Evolution Will Become Possible

AI systems will be developed that can forecast cultural shifts within organizations and industries with unprecedented accuracy. These systems will analyze vast amounts of data, including communication patterns, employee sentiment, and external market forces, to predict how organizational culture will evolve. This will allow HR to proactively shape culture, rather than merely responding to changes after they occur.

Organizations Will Adopt Quantum Scenario Planning

As quantum computing becomes more accessible, HR will leverage its power to model incredibly complex, multi-variable workforce scenarios. This will enable HR to simultaneously prepare for numerous possible futures, accounting for factors ranging from geopolitical events to technological breakthroughs and their impacts on talent acquisition, retention and development.

Leaders Will Immerse Themselves in a Virtual-Reality Driven Future

Virtual reality technology will be used to create immersive experiences that allow HR leaders and executives to "live" in potential future scenarios. This approach will go beyond traditional data visualization, allowing decision-makers to emotionally and cognitively engage with different strategic outcomes before implementation, leading to more informed and empathetic decision-making.

06

CLOSING THE TALENT GAP:

Balancing AI Efficiency with the Human Touch in Recruiting

Success lies in harmonizing advanced technology with authentic human connections to create meaningful candidate experiences

CURRENT STATE

The talent acquisition landscape is experiencing unprecedented challenges, but also unprecedented opportunities.

Powered by the rapid evolution of advanced technology and new workplace dynamics, progressive organizations are discovering new ways to attract and engage talent.

Sure, challenges abound. For example:

- The market for top talent has never been more competitive.

- Many organizations are experiencing a tug-of-war between leaders and staff over where and how work should be done.

- Skills that didn't even exist a couple of years ago are now in high demand, with seemingly few qualified or willing candidates available to fill them.

The top talent that organizations do attract is more assertive than ever before. They want to be architects of their own careers. They seek organizations that align with their values and aspirations. They're asking thoughtful questions about culture, growth opportunities and work-life harmony.

Some employers struggle with these shifts and resist change. But, if approached from a different perspective, this evolution presents an exciting opportunity for organizations to showcase their unique value proposition and build authentic connections with potential talent. The solutions to all the challenges are ripe for the picking — if organizations embrace the new technologies and strategies that are available.

For example, AI and automation have evolved from experimental tools to powerful allies in the recruiter's toolkit, enabling unprecedented efficiency and insights. This is creating space for what matters most: meaningful human connections in the hiring process.

In addition, the emergence of skills-based hiring is opening doors to previously untapped talent pools, while remote work has transformed local talent markets into global ones. Organizations now have the opportunity to build stronger, more innovative teams through inclusive practices that celebrate unique perspectives.

Greatest Challenges in Attracting Talent

Remote vs. in-office work policies
50%

Competition from other employers
49%

Lack of qualified candidates
39%

Offering competitive compensation and benefits
32%

Limited budget, ineffective tools
30%

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, Cracking the Hiring Code

Regulatory Complexity Is on the Rise

Rapidly evolving labor laws and regulations can create compliance headaches, especially for large multinational corporations. What was legal yesterday could be grounds for a lawsuit tomorrow. However, with the right approach, organizations can develop more sophisticated and equitable talent practices. The changes created a need for increased transparency in everything from performance management to compensation. Doing so can build trust and improve the overall employee experience.

We're particularly encouraged by how compliance requirements are pushing organizations toward more data-informed approaches to talent decisions. This shift not only ensures fairness but also leads to better outcomes for both individuals and organizations. The harmonization of international labor standards can also create opportunities for organizations to develop more consistent global talent practices while respecting local cultural nuances.

COMPLEXITIES

The evolution of talent acquisition brings with it complexities that invite innovation and strategic thinking:

Reimagining skills-based hiring:

The shift to skills-based hiring represents an opportunity to discover talent in unexpected places. Organizations should develop creative approaches to evaluate capabilities and potential, moving beyond traditional credentials to unlock hidden talent pools.

AI as a strategic partner:

Forward-thinking companies are fundamentally redesigning their EVP to reflect changing workforce expectations and needs. This goes far beyond traditional compensation and benefits to encompass meaningful work, career growth opportunities, workplace flexibility and comprehensive well-being support. Organizations are creating personalized employee experiences that recognize the diverse needs and aspirations of their workforce, leading to higher engagement and retention.

Global talent engagement:

Remote work has eliminated geographical boundaries, creating unprecedented opportunities to build diverse, global teams. This expansion creates challenges in creating inclusive cultures that span time zones and unite different perspectives.

Elevating inclusive hiring:

Organizations have the ability now to better ensure fair, unbiased hiring processes. By combining technological innovation with human wisdom, they can create recruitment practices that actively promote diversity and enable every candidate to shine.
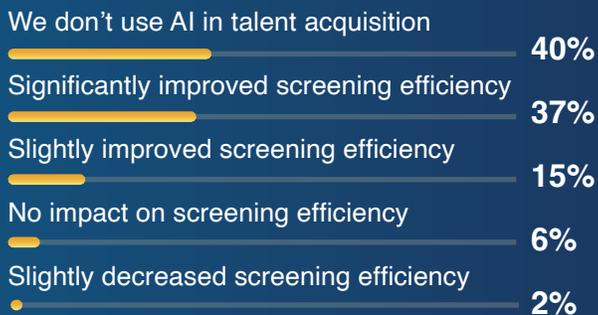
The strategic talent advisor:

Technology and innovation enable recruiters to evolve from tacticians to strategic business partners, combining deep market insights with technological expertise. Recruiters can grow into new roles that will enable them to drive organizational success through innovative talent strategies.

Reimagining the onboarding experience:

The evolution of hybrid and remote work has transformed onboarding from a series of first-day activities into a strategic journey that begins well before day one. This transformation requires rethinking how we build culture, transfer knowledge, and create belonging in both virtual and physical environments.

How AI is Improving Efficiency of Candidate Screening

We don't use AI in talent acquisition
40%

Significantly improved screening efficiency
37%

Slightly improved screening efficiency
15%

No impact on screening efficiency
6%

Slightly decreased screening efficiency
2%

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, Cracking the Hiring Code

IMPLICATIONS

The evolving environment presents unprecedented opportunities for organizations ready to reimagine their approach to talent acquisition. At Brandon Hall Group™, we're seeing leading organizations transform today's challenges into tomorrow's competitive advantages through innovative approaches that combine technological advancement with human insight.

These opportunities represent more than just incremental improvements — they're pathways to transformative change in how organizations attract, engage and secure talent. The key to success lies not in pursuing all these opportunities simultaneously, but in strategically selecting and executing the ones that align best with your organization's unique context and goals.

Skills-Based Talent Discovery

The shift to skills-based hiring represents one of the most important transformations in talent acquisition. Organizations that have embraced this approach are discovering talent in unexpected places. By moving beyond traditional credentials to focus on capabilities and potential, you can go beyond filling positions — you can build more adaptable, diverse and high-performing teams.

Candidate Experience Leadership

Excellence in candidate experience has emerged as a crucial differentiator in the talent market. Organizations that excel in this area are creating authentic, engaging experiences that naturally attract aligned talent while building long-term relationships with candidates whether they're hired or not.

The impact extends far beyond improved offer acceptance rates — we're seeing stronger employer brands, better quality of hire and more efficient recruiting processes. Success requires thoughtful design of every candidate touchpoint, but the returns in terms of talent attraction and engagement are transformative.

Most Frequently Used Practices to Improve Candidate Experience

Streamlined application process
58%

Candidate-centric practices (experience surveys, transparent hiring process)
51%

Post-application engagement (referral program, alternative opportunities for unsuccessful candidates)
49%

New technology
46%

Enhanced communication (chatbot support, feedback sessions)
42%

No new candidate experience initiatives planned
17%

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, Cracking the Hiring Code

Onboarding Innovation

The most successful organizations are treating onboarding as a strategic driver of engagement and retention, not just an administrative process. They're creating immersive experiences that blend technical training, cultural integration and relationship building in ways that work for both in-person and remote employees. This approach is proving particularly powerful for organizations with hybrid workforces, where consistent experiences regardless of location are crucial for long-term success.

Internal Mobility Excellence

Organizations mastering internal mobility are reducing hiring costs while improving employee engagement and retention. This isn't just about filling roles internally — it's about creating career pathways that enable continuous growth and adaptation to changing business needs.

Data-Driven Excellence

Leading organizations are using sophisticated analytics to transform talent acquisition from an art to a science. This isn't about replacing intuition with data — it's about enhancing human judgment with deeper insights and predictive capabilities.

Leading companies can improve the percentage of good hires, allocate resources more efficiently and improve alignment between hiring strategies and business outcomes. Their success demonstrates that data-driven recruiting, when properly implemented, creates a foundation for sustained excellence in talent acquisition.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Organizations looking to take talent acquisition to the next level should consider these questions:

- How can we leverage AI to enhance, rather than replace, human connection in hiring?

- What innovative approaches will help us identify and develop talent for future roles?

- How can we create hiring experiences that resonate across generations while staying authentic to our values?

- What creative strategies will ensure our AI-driven practices promote fairness and inclusion?

- How can we build an employer brand that inspires and attracts exceptional talent?

- What role should internal mobility play in our talent ecosystem?

- How can we measure and communicate the transformative impact of our talent initiatives?
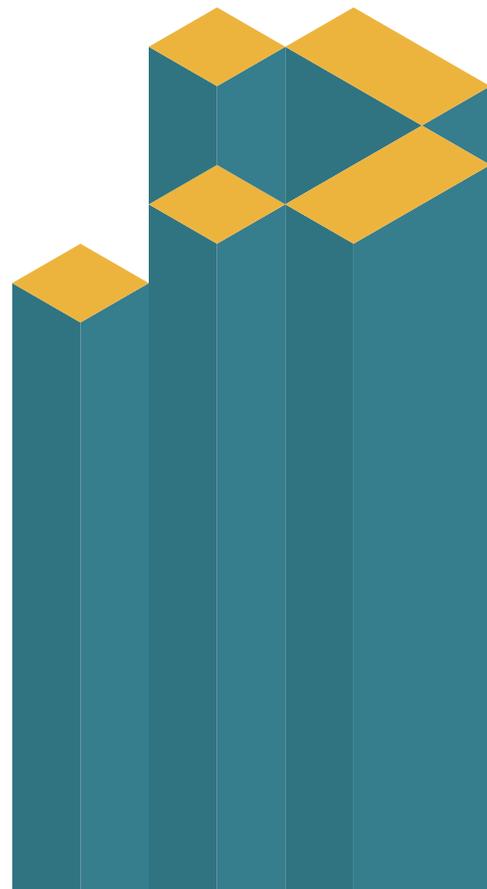
BRANDON HALL GROUP™
POINT OF VIEW

At Brandon Hall Group™, we believe the future of talent acquisition lies at the intersection of technological innovation and authentic human connection. Our research and work with leading organizations have revealed clear pathways to excellence that combine the best of both worlds.

Innovative Talent Acquisition Strategies in Use Now or Within the Next Year

AI-driven recruitment processes	**41%**
Implement pre-hire assessments related to behavior, experience and skill	**38%**
Social media and referral optimization	**36%**
Digital onboarding platforms Enhanced candidate engagement (chatbots, virtual career fairs, talent communities)	**32%**
Advanced assessment tools (gamification, VR/AR job previews)	**29%**
Blockchain and verification technologies	**16%**

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, Cracking the Hiring Code

Here's our vision for transformative talent acquisition:

Harness Technology to Amplify Human Connection

Our research shows that when organizations strategically automate routine tasks, they create space for what truly matters: meaningful candidate conversations and thoughtful decision-making.

We recommend implementing AI-powered scheduling and screening tools with the specific goal of freeing up recruiter time for high-value candidate interactions. For example, while chatbots can handle routine queries effectively, successful organizations ensure seamless handoffs to human recruiters for complex discussions. They're using predictive analytics not just to screen candidates, but to identify which candidates need more personal attention during the hiring process. The result? Higher candidate satisfaction, better quality hires, and more efficient processes.

Transform Skills into Opportunities

The transition to skills-based hiring represents one of the most promising opportunities in talent acquisition. We're seeing organizations transform their approach by developing frameworks that recognize both technical and human capabilities, creating clear pathways for talent development and mobility.

Success in this area requires more than just updating job descriptions. Leading organizations are building comprehensive skill taxonomies that map directly to business outcomes. They're creating internal talent marketplaces that make skills visible and transferable across the organization while developing assessment tools that evaluate both current capabilities and learning potential.

Create Inspiring Candidate Journeys

Every interaction in the hiring process is an opportunity to showcase your organization's unique value proposition. We recommend starting with a detailed mapping of your candidate journey, identifying key moments that matter for different candidate personas. Leading organizations are building content libraries of employee stories and experiences, tagged by role and career stage, to provide authentic insights into their culture. They're implementing two-way feedback mechanisms throughout the hiring process and developing talent communities around specific skills or interests.

Build Authentic Connections

Your employer brand should be more than marketing — it should reflect genuine employee experiences and organizational values. Leading companies are creating micro-internships and job shadowing opportunities, hosting virtual "ask me anything" sessions with team members and developing role-specific employee value propositions backed by real stories. They're building skill-specific communities where candidates can engage with experts and implementing regular pulse surveys to ensure the employee experience matches brand promises.

Introduce Inclusive Innovation

Technology can be a powerful force for inclusion when implemented thoughtfully. We've seen organizations achieve remarkable results by leveraging AI to identify and eliminate bias while creating systematic changes that promote diversity.

Leading companies are using AI to analyze job descriptions for biased language and suggest inclusive alternatives. They're implementing structured interview guides with standardized evaluation criteria and creating diverse interview panels. The most successful organizations establish clear diversity metrics and accountability at each hiring stage while creating inclusion ambassadors who help shape and validate hiring practices.

Transform Onboarding into a Strategic Advantage

Leading companies are implementing pre-boarding programs that maintain engagement between offer acceptance and start date, using this time to begin cultural integration and technical preparation. They're creating personalized digital experiences that adapt to each new hire's role, location and learning style while ensuring consistent delivery of crucial information and connections.

We're seeing particular success with organizations that take a "concierge" approach to onboarding, combining high-tech and high-touch elements. For example, automated systems handle documentation and basic training scheduling, while dedicated onboarding specialists focus on creating meaningful connections and addressing individual needs.

The most innovative companies are extending onboarding beyond traditional 30-60-90-day plans to create year-long integration journeys. They're measuring success through metrics like time-to-productivity, cultural alignment scores, new-hire satisfaction and retention rates at key milestones.

Successful onboarding strategies in hybrid environments require particular attention to creating equitable experiences. Leading organizations are using technology to ensure remote employees have the same access to resources, relationships and opportunities as their in-office counterparts.

Foster Continuous Learning

Transforming your organization into a learning ecosystem creates a sustainable competitive advantage in talent acquisition. We're seeing leading companies develop internal certification programs for high-demand skills and create mentor networks that support career progression. They're measuring success through internal fill rates, skill acquisition speed, and career progression velocity.

Measure What Matters

Excellence in talent acquisition requires sophisticated analytics that capture true impact. Leading organizations are implementing balanced scorecards that combine traditional metrics with strategic outcomes. They're tracking the correlation between hiring practices and business performance, measuring the lifetime value of candidate relationships and calculating the value of their talent communities and networks.

How Organizations Use Data Analytics
Now or Within 12 Months

Source evaluation

(analyzing effectiveness and ROI of recruitment sources)

51%

Strategic workforce planning

(skills gap analysis, retention strategies)

50%

Candidate insights

(predictive modeling for success, sentiment analysis)

49%

Process optimization

(real-time reporting, automated forecasting)

43%

Market intelligence

(optimizing job postings based on market data)

41%

Data integration

(combining data from multiple recruitment sources)

38%

DEI analysis

33%

No plans to use data analytics

14%

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, Cracking the Hiring Code

PREDICTIONS

We believe talent acquisition will continue to evolve at a rapid pace, fueled by technology innovation. Here is what is possible in the months and years ahead:

✕ AR/VR/Gaming Will Become the Norm for Candidate Assessment

Virtual reality will transform how candidates experience potential employers, offering immersive "day in the life" simulations before they even apply. Assessment will evolve beyond traditional interviews to include interactive scenarios and gamified challenges that evaluate real-world capabilities. This technology will particularly shine in helping candidates understand company culture and work environment while giving employers more authentic insights into how candidates approach problems and collaborate.

✕ AI Recruiting Bots Will Develop Sophisticated Emotional Intelligence Capabilities

The next generation of recruiting chatbots and virtual assistants will move far beyond basic screening and scheduling. These AI systems will be able to build genuine rapport with candidates, understand nuanced responses and adapt their communication style to each individual. While maintaining transparency about their artificial nature, these systems will provide personalized, empathetic interactions throughout the hiring process, dramatically improving candidate experience while reducing recruiter workload. As with everything, however, employers should tread carefully and conduct pilot projects to avoid alienating potential candidates.

✕ Candidate Matching Will Reach New Levels of Sophistication Through AI

Advanced algorithms will analyze vast arrays of data points to predict job fit with unprecedented accuracy. These systems will go beyond the traditional matching of skills and experience to consider subtle factors like communication style, work preferences and growth potential. Additionally, AI will take on a larger role in hiring manager development, providing personalized coaching on interviewing techniques and helping eliminate bias.

## Blockchain Technology Will Revolutionize Credential Verification

The traditional process of verifying candidates' credentials will be transformed by blockchain-based systems that provide immediate, tamper-proof verification of education, certifications and work history. This will dramatically reduce time-to-hire while eliminating credential fraud. These secure digital records will become the new standard, enabling instant verification of candidates' qualifications and creating a more efficient hiring process.

Predictive Analytics Will Transform Retention Strategies

Sophisticated AI models will analyze patterns across hundreds of variables to predict candidate longevity and success within organizations. These models will consider factors ranging from career progression patterns to cultural alignment indicators, helping organizations make more informed hiring decisions. However, these tools will require careful ethical oversight to ensure they don't perpetuate historical biases or unfairly exclude candidates.

Neurodiversity-Focused Hiring Will Become a Mainstream Priority

Organizations will develop sophisticated processes specifically designed to attract, assess and support neurodiverse talent. This will include customized interview processes, sensory-friendly assessment environments and AI-powered job matching that identifies roles where neurodiverse candidates' unique strengths can shine. Success in this area will require fundamental changes to traditional hiring practices and workplace environments.
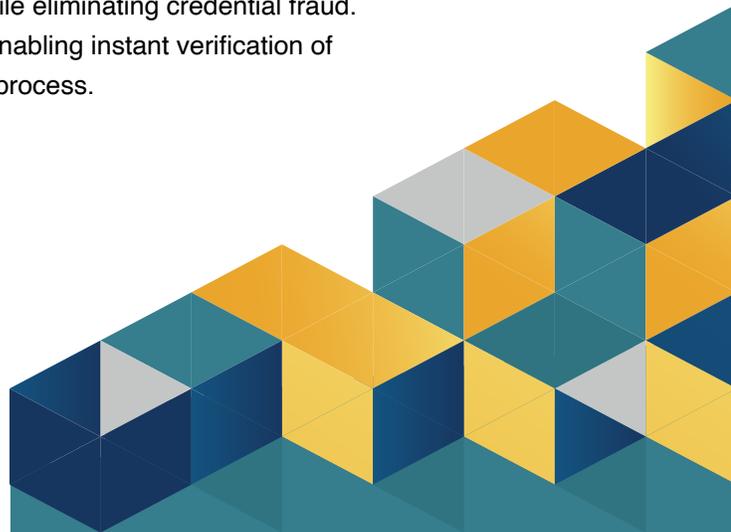
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Interactive learning experiences with industry experts

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Real-world examples of successful transformations

Ask the Expert Support ←
Direct access to our faculty and analysts for guidance

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07

RETHINKING WORK

It's Time to Craft the Future Workplace Experience

As technological advancement converges with shifting societal values, organizations face an unprecedented opportunity to unlock human potential through reimagined workplace ecosystems

CURRENT STATE

The convergence of technological advancement, shifting societal values and changing human expectations has created an unprecedented opportunity to fundamentally reimagine how work gets done.

This isn't just about where work happens — it's about crafting experiences that unlock human potential in ways previously unimagined.

The workplace revolution that began as a response to global disruption has evolved into something far more profound. Progressive organizations are moving beyond basic hybrid models to explore sophisticated workplace ecosystems that blend physical, digital and human elements in novel ways.

Where Will You Invest the Most in HR in 2025?

Outside Services **7%**

Staff **20%**

Technology **73%**
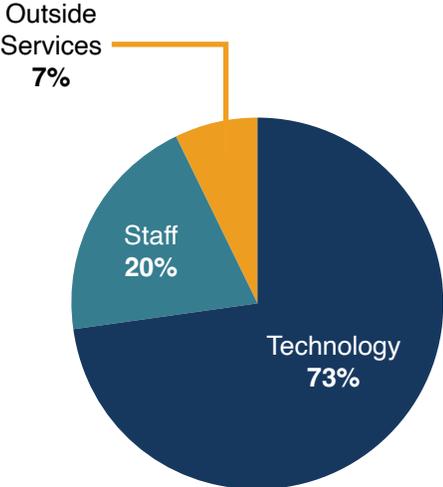
Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, HR Outlook 2025

The most innovative approaches to transforming the workforce experience focus on three key dimensions:

01 Experience architecture

Forward-thinking organizations are crafting workplace experiences that adapt dynamically to human needs. Imagine entering a workspace — physical or virtual — that automatically adjusts to your working style, energy levels and collaboration preferences. These intelligent environments use advanced analytics to understand when you're most creative, when you need quiet focus time and when you're primed for collaborative work.

02 Human-technology symbiosis

The future of work isn't about technology replacing humans — it's about technology amplifying human capabilities. Advanced AI systems should become collaborative partners, handling routine tasks while elevating human work to focus on creativity, strategic thinking and complex problem-solving. This will create new possibilities for innovation and productivity.

03 Cultural evolution

The most successful organizations are cultivating cultures that thrive in fluid, distributed environments. They're moving beyond traditional hierarchies to create collaboration networks that form and reform around opportunities. These cultures emphasize trust, autonomy, targeted skills and continuous learning to reach business goals.

Generative AI (GenAI) can help HR play a critical strategic role in all of this, according to Brandon Hall Group™ research. For example, Gen AI can lead to:
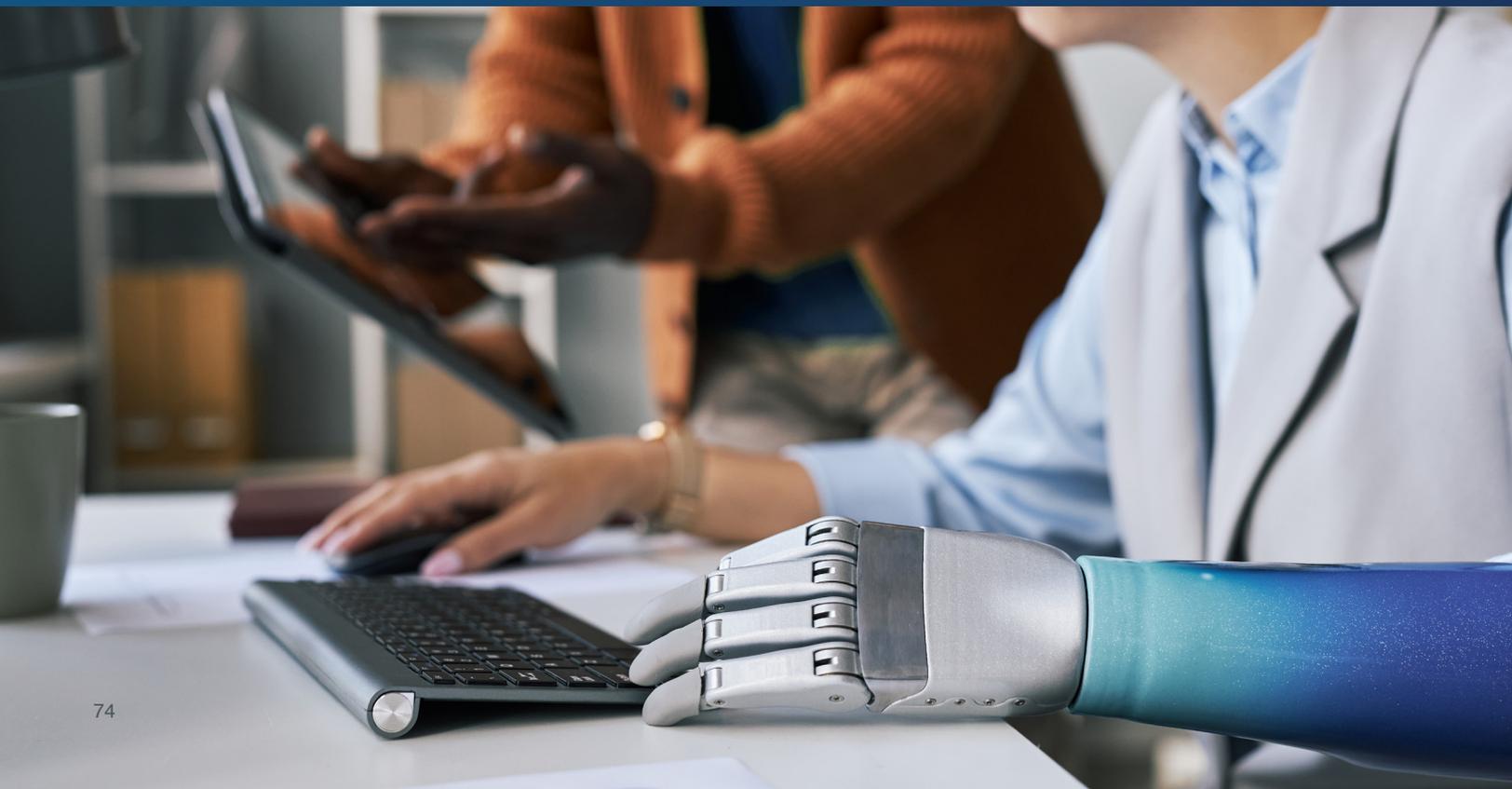
✦ Increased efficiency by automating routine tasks that allow HR professionals to focus on strategic initiatives in collaboration with other functions.

✦ Enhanced data analytics that uncover workforce sentiment and patterns that can provide insights on how to approach the evolution of work.

✦ Improved employee experiences through faster response times to employee requests and concerns.

✦ Job descriptions that do a better job of communicating work requirements and expectations.

✦ Predictive models that help anticipate employee retention and performance.

However, the majority of HR professionals surveyed think AI will have a high impact in 2025 only in Learning and Development, whereas it can have a significant impact in many areas of HR that will be vital in reimagining the work experience.

Where AI Will Have a High Impact in HR in 2025

Learning and development	60%	
Talent acquisition	41%	
Talent management	30%	
Leadership development	24%	
Human resources	16%	
Diversity, equity and inclusion	8%	

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, The Learning Revolution

COMPLEXITIES

The journey to reimagine work presents challenges that require sophisticated solutions. Think of it as conducting an orchestra where each section must play its part perfectly while harmonizing with the whole.

Strategic Tensions

The most pressing challenges lie in balancing competing priorities in an increasingly complex environment:

Innovation vs. stability. How do organizations create space for experimentation and innovation while maintaining operational excellence? The answer lies in creating frameworks that provide structure while enabling rapid adaptation and evolution. GenAI can help with this.

Global vs. local. The future workplace must somehow be both universal and personal, providing consistent experiences while adapting to local contexts and individual needs. This requires a new approach to workplace design that builds flexibility into its very foundation.

Technology vs. human connection. The challenge isn't choosing between digital efficiency and human connection — it's finding ways to use technology to enhance, rather than replace, human relationships.

Operational Hurdles

The technical challenges of reimagining work extend beyond simple technology implementation:

Experience integration. Creating experiences across physical and digital environments requires rethinking everything from workspace design to technology infrastructure. The goal is to make the transition between different environments so natural that it becomes invisible.

Learning integration. Future workplaces must embed learning so that it can be accessed and leveraged as needed while work is ongoing. This means creating environments where skill development happens naturally through daily activities, supported by AI systems that understand individual learning styles and career aspirations.

Cultural Challenges

Perhaps the most complex challenges lie in the human dimension:

Trust in virtual environments. Building and maintaining trust without physical proximity requires new approaches to leadership and collaboration. This means creating digital environments that foster psychological safety and enable authentic connection.

Innovation without proximity. Sparking creativity and innovation in distributed settings demands new approaches to collaboration and ideation. This requires reimagining how we bring people together across digital spaces to create breakthrough solutions.

High Priorities in Human Resources, 2025

Build a culture of psychological safety and belonging
63%

Improve the learner experience
62%

Improve employee experience, engagement and retention
58%

Improve all types of wellness/well-being
48%

Improve employer brand
47%

Improve inclusive leadership
47%

Source: Brandon Hall Group™ study, HR Outlook 2025

Generative AI can be a big help in improving culture by generating personalized engagement surveys based on employee demographics, offering insights into company values and traditions and providing personalized suggestions for getting involved in company initiatives and activities that may not always be easily visible to the dispersed workforce.

IMPLICATIONS

The human reaction to all this disruption is to move cautiously or procrastinate. Whether to be proactive or delay carries consequences that extend far beyond operational inefficiency. Each year an organization delays workplace innovation will create an exponentially widening gap between organizations that embrace change and those that resist it.

Organizations that fail to reimagine work will experience a cascading series of challenges that become increasingly difficult to overcome:

Talent attraction and retention. The most capable professionals will gravitate toward organizations that offer flexible work experiences that fit their professional and personal goals. This creates a self-reinforcing cycle where innovative workplaces attract innovative talent, while traditional environments struggle to maintain their talent base.

Innovation capacity. As business objectives evolve, organizations clinging to traditional models will find their innovation capacity diminishing. This isn't just about losing creative talent — it's about missing the collaborative possibilities that emerge from new ways of working.

Market adaptability. Organizations that are built to be agile can be more adaptable to market changes. Their fluid structures and enhanced collaboration capabilities allow them to sense and respond to opportunities faster than their competitors.

The impact of inaction compounds across multiple dimensions:

01 Organizations that delay workplace innovation enable existing practices to become more entrenched, making future change increasingly difficult and costly. It is possible to be deliberate and careful in making changes while still projecting an agile and growth mindset. The workforce must understand that evolution is inevitable and will benefit everyone in the long run.

02 The gap between employee expectations in adding technology that improves the work experience grows wider with each passing month. The cost and complexity of closing this gap increase exponentially over time.

03 Perhaps most critically, organizations that fail to reimagine work find their strategic options increasingly constrained. They become limited not just by what their technology can do, but by what their people can imagine.

CRITICAL
QUESTIONS

Leaders must grapple with fundamental questions that will shape their organization's future:

- How can we create workplace experiences that don't just enable work but elevate human potential?

- What unique advantages could we create by reimagining how work happens?

- How can we optimize the use of advanced technologies to shape the future of work without devaluing the human element?

- How do we ensure our workplace innovation aligns with our broader purpose and values?

- Where should we focus our initial efforts to create maximum impact?

- How do we balance short-term needs with long-term transformation?

- What metrics will best capture the full value of workplace innovation?

- What new capabilities must leaders develop to thrive in fluid, distributed environments?

- How do we maintain strategic alignment while empowering autonomous decision-making?

- What leadership approaches best foster innovation in hybrid settings?

- How do we prepare our workforce for continuous adaptation?

- What support structures will enable peak performance in new work models?

- How do we maintain human connection in increasingly digital environments?

BRANDON HALL GROUP™ POINT OF VIEW

The future of work demands more than incremental changes — it requires a fundamental reimagining of the workplace experience. Our research points to five critical imperatives:

Embrace Experience Design

The future workplace must be intentionally designed to enhance human capability. This means moving beyond traditional approaches to create integrated experience ecosystems that:

- Adapt to individual working styles and preferences.

- Support both focused work and collaborative innovation.

- Enable easy transitions between different work modes.

- Foster connections and creative collisions.

The key is creating environments that feel both highly personalized and deeply connected to the broader organizational purpose.

Cultivate Intelligent Adaptation

Success requires building advanced technology ecosystems that learn and evolve. The future workplace must be:

- Responsive to changing needs and preferences.

- Predictive of emerging challenges and opportunities.

- Adaptive to different working styles and cultural contexts.

This means creating frameworks that combine human insight with artificial intelligence to continuously enhance the work experience.

Foster Human-Technology Synergy

The future is about creating powerful combinations of artificial intelligence and human ingenuity. This requires:

- Designing technology that amplifies human creativity and insight.

- Creating interfaces that feel natural and intuitive.

- Building systems that learn from human interaction.

- Enabling new forms of collaboration and innovation.

The goal is to use technology not just to automate tasks but to elevate human potential.

Create Trust-Based Ecosystems

Success in the future workplace depends on building high-trust environments that enable:

- Autonomous decision-making at all levels.

- Rapid experimentation and innovation.

- Authentic collaboration across boundaries.

- Psychological safety in digital spaces.

This requires new approaches to leadership, communication and culture that work in both physical and virtual settings.

The Time for Action is Now

We have the greatest opportunity for organizational transformation in a generation. Organizations that act boldly to reimagine their workplace experience will create sustainable competitive advantages that extend far beyond operational efficiency. They will unlock new levels of human potential, innovation and organizational performance.

The question is not whether to reimagine work, but how quickly and effectively organizations can execute this transformation. The gap between leaders and laggards grows wider each day. The time for action is now.

PREDICTIONS

As we peer into the horizon of workplace evolution, several bold predictions emerge, aligning with the themes we've explored. These forecasts paint a picture of a radically transformed professional landscape in the years to come.

The Rise of the Relationship Economy

Within the next few years, traditional resumes will become obsolete, replaced by dynamic "relationship portfolios." These digital profiles will showcase an individual's network, collaborative projects and social capital, becoming the primary currency in job markets. AI-driven platforms will match candidates with opportunities based on their relationship strength and past collaborative successes, rather than just skills and experience. This shift will fundamentally change how we perceive professional value, placing a premium on one's ability to build and maintain meaningful connections across diverse networks. Companies will invest heavily in fostering these relationship-building skills among their employees, recognizing them as critical assets in an increasingly interconnected global economy.

Virtual Reality Offices Become the Norm

VR and AR technologies will create immersive virtual workspaces, allowing seamless collaboration regardless of physical location. Within the next several years, the majority of office work will occur in these highly sophisticated virtual environments. These spaces will enable truly global collaboration without the need for travel. Virtual offices will be customizable, allowing for instant shifts between different work modes — from collaborative brainstorming spaces to quiet, focused environments. Physical offices will be reimagined as occasional meeting hubs for team-building and special events, while day-to-day operations will primarily occur in the virtual realm.

Skills-Based Hiring Revolutionizes Recruitment

Traditional resumes and degrees will become less important as organizations focus on specific skills and competencies, often assessed through AI-driven tests and simulations. In the not-too-distant future, most major companies will have shifted to a skills-first hiring approach, utilizing advanced AI algorithms to match candidates' capabilities with job requirements. These systems will go beyond traditional skills assessments, using complex simulations and real-world problem-solving scenarios to evaluate a candidate's potential. Continuous learning platforms will be directly integrated with hiring systems, allowing individuals to upskill in real time based on market demands. This shift will democratize access to opportunities, allowing talented individuals to showcase their abilities regardless of formal education or work history.

Emotion-Optimized Environments Enhance Productivity

Workspaces will use advanced sensors and AI to constantly adjust lighting, temperature, and ambiance to maximize emotional well-being and productivity for each individual. Eventually, these "empathetic environments" will become standard in both physical and virtual workspaces. AI systems will learn individual preferences and physiological responses, creating personalized environments that adapt in real-time to an employee's emotional state and work requirements. This technology will extend to virtual reality offices, where entire landscapes can shift to induce specific emotional states conducive to the task at hand.

The Emergence of 'Reality Architects'

New roles will emerge focused on designing and maintaining the complex virtual and augmented realities that serve as primary work environments. The "reality architect" will be one of the fastest-growing job categories. These professionals will combine expertise in UX design, psychology, data science and virtual world-building to create immersive, productive digital workspaces. They will be responsible for ensuring that virtual environments are not only functional but also conducive to creativity, collaboration and well-being. Reality architects will work closely with HR, IT and executive teams to align virtual workspaces with company culture and objectives.

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Leaders from across the HR spectrum share their perspectives on important issues and trends and what the future holds

PERSONALIZING LEARNING

Bob Gerard
Learning Ingenuity Lead
Accenture

"Benjamin Bloom, the Bloom's taxonomy guy, did some research toward the end of his life where he discovered that one-to-one learning, like a student working with a tutor, is more effective than one-to-many, like a teacher working with a class. …   What we're seeing in the age of AI is that we can make tutors more scalable and available to everybody. We at Accenture see a world where everybody has their own personalized learning coach who knows them maybe even better than they know themselves and can recommend, direct, maybe even curate on-the-fly, learning experiences for the user. We're gradually working on the steps that will get us to realize that vision. That's what we see."

THE VALUE OF LEARNER CENTRICITY

Ashley Williams
CEO and CLO
Executive Education & Lifelong Learning
UVA Darden

"There's a huge body of work out there around the experiences customers have with a company. The same goes for learning: put the learner, the human, at the center of what you do. If you actually put the learner at the center, what would that tell you about what you would need to change in your learning programs? We're increasingly seeing that if you do that, you can better understand people's paths and pathways through companies."

THE FUTURE OF CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Ashwin Mehta
Founder and Director
Mehtadology

"I think in the content space, we'll probably get to the point where we have tiers of acceptability in our content where we say what can be made using AI. And then we'll start to reimagine what the value of content actually is, because what is the point of churning out lots and lots of content when we just have [virtual] agents around us?"

AI AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Todd Smith
Executive Director, Enterprise Learning & Development
The Estee Lauder Companies

"Future leaders will, of course, need to become increasingly comfortable with the deeper penetration and integration of AI within our business models. Not only should leaders use AI-enabled tools for support to articulate their missions, visions and values along with their organizational strategic goals and objectives, but they should bring the efficiencies into everyday meetings and task-oriented components of getting work done. Additionally, leaders need to think about the future implications of AI – how will it fundamentally shape the way your workforce accomplishes their work, interacts with your consumers and moves your industry forward? From budgeting to organizational design, to talent development, to technology investment – future leaders must "invite" AI to the table while maintaining an air of responsibility and governance to avoid pitfalls."

AI AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Kimberly Currier
Global Vice President, Leadership Development
AECOM

"The emerging technologies, including AI, will require leaders to be able to see the balance of capability across both digital tools and people and focus on the highest and best of use for both. I do not think AI will replace humans, but humans will need to learn to work with and through digital tools and AI technology. That is a new leadership capability that has been and will continue to emerge as the technology emerges."

Amy Happ
Director, Leadership Development and Learning Innovation
Grant Thornton Advisors

"The future of leadership development is set to become increasingly personalized, driven by advancements in AI-enabled learning platforms and tools. While human-centered skills such as emotional intelligence, empathy, collaboration, and authenticity will remain crucial, the integration of AI will revolutionize how these skills are developed. We can expect a rise in assessments and surveys which will create and recommend tailored learning journeys coupled with AI and virtual coaching, ensuring that each leader's development path is uniquely suited to their strengths and areas for growth."

THE IMPORTANCE OF ONGOING LEADER NETWORKING

Rachel Bolton
Director, Enterprise Leadership Development
Stanley Black & Decker and formerly of Wesco

"We rely heavily on surveys to determine how to improve our leadership programs. After every live session that we conduct, we have a survey. And we really believe that the customer is right. And one of the things that we've learned is that the participants want more networking time with the cohort after the formal program ends. They would like fireside chats from our leaders across the organization where they speak to them about specific leadership drivers. They want more in-person opportunities. As a learning organization, you cannot hide from that. We know that they love that, and they get so much from it. This is important for us as learning leaders to remember."

LEADING THE MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

Rajat Sanan
Head of Learning and Development
SG Analytics

"Initially, leadership development has been more about how to manage the business better, how to manage themselves better. But now it is coming to how do you manage the different people. Because you have people who are either Gen Z or Gen Alpha or you have Millennials. Now you have either Baby Boomers or Millennials managing these people. So definitely the transgenerational thing is always there. So we want to make our leaders evolve in those aspects which help them manage the transgenerational audiences."

THE FUTURE OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Ryan Grad
Leader, Talent Management
Kroger

"When I think about performance management, we as an HR function must be able to remove as many barriers as possible to help our people focus on what matters most. So we must ask ourselves, how do we move from performance being seen as an administrative task to the foundation of how we work, how we hold each other accountable and how we celebrate successes?"

REMOVING THE SILOS OF HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Jenna Filipkowski, PhD.
Head of Learning and Development

"As we envision the future, it's crucial to consider the impact on how HR is structuring itself today. The traditional siloed functional approach, where individuals are designated as "talent acquisition" or "talent management," may no longer be the reality. This is because there's a significant connection among all areas of HCM. Instead, I foresee the emergence of cross-functional teams that bring together a diverse set of expertise. These teams will include human behavior experts, communication and change management professionals, talent acquisition specialists, workforce planning and analytics experts. They will form a kind of "mini consulting centers" that can proactively address the evolving needs of the business, together."

CREATING AI-HUMAN PARTNERSHIPS

Akshay Loomba
Vice President and Head of Talent Acquisition
Unifi

"AI will help Talent Acquisition (TA) in data-driven decision making, insights on market trends, salary benchmarks and key forecasting. On the other hand, human expertise will be required to interpret AI insights and align to business goals, ensuring the ethical use of AI and building compliance protocols to use these technologies ... The next five years will demand that TA leaders be architects of a harmonious AI-human partnership, transforming talent acquisition into a more strategic, ethical, and relationship-driven function."

DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

Brad Chambers
Vice President, Head of North American Assessment
BTS

"We've got to think about how we're using the data and doing so in a meaningful way where we're integrating it with other information we know, and we're using that to make informed decisions, whether those decisions are about whom to hire, whom to promote, or about where do I need to develop my capabilities, we've got to use the data in a useful way. What insights do we ultimately want to be able to draw at the end of the day? And what tool then is going to be able to help us generate those insights in the best way? It's about being really mindful about the approach we're taking."

EFFECTIVENESS IN GLOBAL HIRING

Lou Tedrick
Vice President, Global Learning & Development
Verizon

"As we hired people in India and the Philippines for our global learning organization, we used teams to interview. We had instructional design teams and delivery teams create profiles for the roles we were interviewing for and a rubric for how we would evaluate candidates. We asked people to trust that others could hire for them and that they didn't have to personally hire everyone who would report to them. This was new for us, but it helped us focus on the staffing process. It put the hiring in the hands of a few people so everyone didn't have to be engaged, allowing us to make offers and hires as quickly as possible."

INSIGHTFUL
CONVERSATIONS

These podcasts, from Brandon Hall Group™'s Excellence at Work series hosted by Chief Operating Officer Rachel Cooke, provide diverse perspectives on the evolution of learning, talent and HR practices

Building a Global "Verizon Family' in the Face of Challenges

Lou Tedrick, Vice President of Global Learning and Development at Verizon, shares how Verizon successfully navigated a transformation from a San Francisco-based office culture to a remote-first organization spanning 27 U.S. states and seven countries.

From Learning to Earning: The Business Impact Revolution in L&D

Today's learning and development leaders face a paradigm shift. There's a growing demand to demonstrate tangible business results from L&D. Bob Gerard, a 35-year industry expert and Director of Accenture's Learning Ingenuity Team, explores this trend and its implications for the future of L&D.

Leadership Excellence in Action: How WESCO Built a Global Development Plan from Scratch

Rachel Bolton, Leadership Program Manager for WESCO International, provides practical insights into creating and scaling effective leadership development programs in a global organization. She highlights the importance of executive sponsorship, participant feedback, and continuous innovation in learning delivery.

Building Corporate Athletes: Inside Estée Lauder's Award-Winning Development Program

Todd Smith, Executive Director of Enterprise Learning and Development at Estée Lauder, and Dr. Lauren Hodges, founder of Performance on Purpose, discuss Estée Lauder's award-winning Enterprise Athlete program. The program focuses on a "total person design" to help employees manage their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual energy to perform at their best at work and in life.

Lifelong Learning: Reshaping Talent Development

Ashley Williams, CEO and CLO of Darden Executive Education and Lifelong Learning, explores the evolving landscape of professional development and delves into how organizations, academia and individuals must adapt to meet today's learning challenges, from breaking down traditional degree barriers to embracing new pathways for leadership development.

The Business of Learning: Transforming L&D for Strategic Impact

Theresa E. Zeller, the Global Head of Learning Creation at Merck, discusses the importance of treating learning and development as a business function, the integration of AI in learning processes, and the significance of aligning learning strategies with business objectives.

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Learning is both social and deeply personal in nature. Strategic capabilities — the ones that truly set an organization apart — must be learned together and acquired through experience.

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Large enterprises such as 3M, Marriott International, GE, Baker Hughes, and Nestlé use NovoEd to accelerate their critical initiatives, reconnect teams, and achieve rapid alignment through transformational learning.

NovoEd enables organizations to:

- Deliver streamlined, cohesive learning   experiences across the organization — wherever learners are
- Enable feedback, team-based learning, structured peer learning, and mentorship
- Provide learners with immediate, real-world application in the course of their day-to-day work
- Measure and demonstrate business impact and learning outcomes with meaningful data
- Bring learning sources together into a cohesive experience that spans different modalities
- Scale learning with no-code authoring, robust integrations, automated nudges, progress tracking, and the ability to make mass updates to content

Training Orchestra

trainingorchestra.com

Training Orchestra's award-winning Training Management Software is a scheduling system to automate and simplify Instructor-Led (ILT), Virtual Instructor-Led Training (vILT) and hybrid training operations: session scheduling, resource management, instructor calendars and collaboration, cost tracking, and reporting. As a complement to your LMS and other learning technologies, Training Orchestra can replace all spreadsheets and manual tasks to help L&D, extended enterprise, training companies, and associations to increase resource use, optimize session scheduling, and track and control costs in real-time. Organizations gain control over their training operations so they can, "Train More with Less!"

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LearnUpon

learnupon.com

LearnUpon gives your teams the tools to create impactful, engaging learning experiences. With our learner-centric platform and results-driven support, our LMS helps 1,500+ global businesses, including BambooHR, Hootsuite, and Twilio, focus on what truly matters—increasing performance, enhancing retention, and driving growth.

litmos

litmos.com

Litmos develops learning solutions for top-performing companies. An established leader since 2007, Litmos learning solution includes the easiest-to-use LMS, comprehensive learning content collections, integrations with top workflow tools, and services to support success. Thousands of companies trust Litmos learning solutions to deliver instruction and intelligence to employees, customers, and partners. Acquired by CallidusCloud in 2011, SAP in 2018, and by Francisco Partners in 2022, Litmos continues to innovate award-winning learning technology and set the standard for customer experience and satisfaction. The solutions are used by more than 30 million people in 150 countries, across 37 languages.

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Absorb LMS is a market-leading AI-powered strategic learning system designed to deliver results for all learners—employees, partners, and customers alike. Built to simplify learning management while amplifying impact, Absorb ensures that every learner has access to the tools and knowledge they need to succeed.

Trusted by over 3,000 organizations, Absorb LMS drives productivity, retention, and scalable growth. Its streamlined administration empowers teams to focus on crafting meaningful learning experiences. Advanced reporting and analytics ensure measurable impact and a clear return on investment for learning programs.

From onboarding new employees to equipping partners with the skills they need and educating customers to make the most of your products, Absorb supports continuous learning at every stage. With a flexible, user-friendly design and innovative features, Absorb LMS is the trusted partner for organizations.

chronus.com

Chronus is the leading purpose-driven development platform, providing enterprise-ready solutions designed to tackle workplace disengagement and employee turnover. Offering an innovative approach that fosters relationships, impact and growth through mentoring and ERGs, Chronus empowers organizations to build resilience and success by ensuring employees feel connected, understood and developed.

A standout in the market because of its scalability, simplicity and leading security protocols, Chronus has successfully partnered with major brands and progressive companies for almost two decades. Chronus has delivered remarkable results for companies like Amazon, LVMH, ExxonMobil, NBCUniversal, T-Mobile, Zendesk, American Cancer Society and Paychex.

thoughtindustries.com

Thought Industries delivers learning solutions to help customers, partners, members, and employees realize value from your products and services, driving customer lifetime value and revenue growth. Since 2013, we've revolutionized digital learning, making it modern, intuitive, and scalable. With our powerful platform, you'll be able to deliver personalized learning experiences that drive business outcomes—all with a technology that grows with you.

Create, manage, distribute, and host on-demand content and real-time events to engage and educate your learners and keep them coming back for more. Thought Industries empowers you to give each audience, whether internal or external, a customized experience you can manage (and measure) centrally. With our highly configurable, extensible platform, you can make education a competitive advantage for your business by creating a learning environment that is uniquely yours.

TiER1
PERFORMANCE

tier1performance.com

TiER1 Performance is a proud sponsor and partner to our client award recipients this year.

Most organizational initiatives require some form of transformation. That might be a change in skillsets, mindsets, technology, or processes. We partner to accelerate that transformation with intention—empowering your people from strategy through activation of that change. We partner with leaders like you to define your strategy with clarity; align on the strengths and gaps that impact your ability to deliver the strategy; engage your people to make aligned decisions; and implement the solutions needed to activate and sustain your change.

Our services include but are not limited to:

- Strategic Planning
- Org Design
- Skills Strategy
- Talent Development
- Client Experience
- Employee Experience

- Digital Transformation
- Enterprise Learning Platforms
- Growth
- Leadership Development
- Onboarding

- Product Launch
- Sales Effectiveness
- Strategic Change
- Systems Adoption
- Ways of Working

Strategy and activation are critical to accelerating the results from any transformation. That's why we collaborate across disciplines to custom-craft a people-centered solution that is cohesive and works within your organization.

Infopro Learning

infoprolearning.com

At Infopro Learning, we're driven by a singular purpose: unlocking human potential. For over 30 years, we've been transforming how organizations develop their most valuable asset - their people. As a comprehensive learning and talent development partner, we drive integrated development and workforce transformation across individuals, teams, and organizations to build a performance-ready workforce.

A performance-ready workforce is one that combines the right skills, agility, and mindset to drive business success. It's where individuals become proficient faster, teams deliver exceptional results, and organizations adapt swiftly to change.

In today's Human+AI era, performance-readiness means mastering new ways of working as AI disrupts traditional value streams and workflows. We empower organizations to navigate this transformation by cultivating the essential technological and human skills needed for evolving workflows, ensuring your workforce doesn't just adapt to change but drive it.

Trusted by Fortune 500 companies globally and recognized with over 350 industry awards, we've helped millions of professionals unlock their potential. Ready to build your performance- ready workforce? Let's start the conversation today. Email: info@infoprolearning.com

newberrysolutions.com

Newberry Solutions develops high-performing women leaders in Fortune 500 companies. With award-winning executive coaching, development programs, and the New Lens® app, the company empowers clients such as AT&T, McKesson, and PepsiCo to turn potential into performance and gives broader access to leadership development at scale. New Lens® brings leadership development into a new era through proven micro-learning that fits into busy schedules, customized action plans, and support from peer cohorts, certified coaches, and managers. Clients consistently report higher self-awareness, motivation, and productivity, and a 10x return on time invested.

For 16 years, Newberry Solutions has combined innovative approaches and thought leadership with practical strategies which has led to numerous awards, including the Inc. Power Partner award and the Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence in Technology award, and regular features in Fast Company and Forbes. Visit newberrysolutions.com to learn more or to schedule a New Lens demo.

vantagecircle.com

Vantage Circle, the world's leading behavioral-science-powered employee recognition and rewards SaaS platform, is trusted by over 3.2 million users across 700+ clients worldwide. Over the past 14 years, leading enterprises like Wipro, Infosys, LPL Financial, Bosch, ACG, Tata Communications and Tata Motors have harnessed its innovative features, services, and globally recognized frameworks to transform their work cultures. By empowering HR and team leaders to identify, recognize, and reinforce productive behaviors, Vantage Circle delivers impactful recognition and rewards programs through expert design, seamless execution, and advanced technology.

mentorcliq.com

MentorcliQ is the #1 enterprise-grade Employee Connections Platform, offering two powerful, scalable solutions: a comprehensive mentoring platform and a robust Employee Resource Group (ERG) management platform. Together, these solutions enable global enterprises to build meaningful, measurable connections among employees, driving career growth, engagement, retention, and business outcomes while fostering inclusive, high-performing teams. Trusted by 6.5 million users in 169 countries, with over 450,000 mentoring matches in the last 12 months and 1,600+ ERGs supported, Mentorcliq is the trusted provider to large enterprises across major industries such as financial services, healthcare, automotive, technology, aerospace, CPG, and others.

MentorcliQ was awarded four prestigious 2024 Brandon Hall Group™ Excellence Awards in collaboration with clients AMD, Gannett, and Wintrust.

THE REGIS COMPANY

regiscompany.com

The Regis Company is delivering the industry's most powerful Personalized Skills Practice solutions through the SimGate platform, enabling learners and organizations to maximize their value. SimGate, and The Regis Company, exist to ignite meaning and purpose within workers and the workplace. The Regis Company supports 25+ Fortune 500 customers, such as EY, Deloitte, Abbott, McDonald's, and Lockheed Martin, helping them to achieve their learning and development goals and evolve to meet today's business demands.

WELEARN

welearnls.com

WeLearn is a learning and development company dedicated to transforming how organizations and individuals connect, grow, and thrive. With a mission to build better humans through learning, we empower businesses to unlock their workforce's potential by creating engaging, inclusive, and impactful learning experiences that inspire lasting growth. At WeLearn, we specialize in designing comprehensive learning strategies that align with business goals, ensuring measurable outcomes and sustainable success. From assessing organizational needs to implementing innovative learning solutions, we partner with our clients to create roadmaps that elevate both people and businesses. Our expertise spans custom content development, digital learning solutions, and workforce development programs tailored to meet the needs of today's learners.

We go beyond traditional approaches, combining creativity, cutting-edge technology, and a deep understanding of adult learning principles to craft experiences that are meaningful, measurable, and memorable. Guided by our values of connection, generosity, and empathy, WeLearn is more than a partner—we're your companion on the journey to building a culture of learning, innovation, and impact.

Join us on our mission to make learning accessible, transformative, and deeply human.

explorance.

explorance.com

Explorance empowers organizations with next-generation feedback analytics to accelerate the insight-to-action cycle, encouraging the philosophy of "Feedback for the brave" to drive purpose, impact, and growth.
In an AI-driven world where feedback is pivotal for decision-making, Explorance is committed to amplifying the voices of employees (VoE) and students, tailoring its solutions to advance vital initiatives like skills development, corporate learning effectiveness, teaching effectiveness, and student success.

Bringing 20 years of expertise, Explorance, a member of the World Economic Forum, has influenced over 25 million individuals with award-winning solutions like Blue, Metrics That Matter, and MLY. A trusted partner for 35% of Fortune 100 companies and 25% of top global educational institutions, Explorance champions data interoperability through key partnerships with major LMS and SIS partners, including Microsoft, Cornerstone, Oracle, Ellucian, and Instructure.

Explorance, an AI award winner, is consistently among the top employers by the Great Places to Work Institute® and a two-time Global Leader in the 360-degree feedback market by Fortune Business Insights. For more information, visit explorance.com or connect on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.

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ABOUT US

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 30 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group™ is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

Professional Certifications
Self-paced certification programs. Virtual group sessions for companies. In-person conferences and summits.

Membership
Individual and Enterprise Membership Options: Includes research assets, advisory support, a client success plan and more.

SOME WAYS WE CAN HELP

Excellence Awards
Four annual programs recognize the best organizations that have successfully deployed programs to achieve measurable results.

Advisory Offerings
Custom Research Projects, including surveys, focus group interviews and Organization Needs Assessment for Transformation, Technology Selection and Strategy.

Agency!
Agency! by Brandon Hall Group™ is a modern Digital Marketing Agency laser-focused on HR solution providers, including brand development, digital marketing, content strategy, lead generation, consultation, reporting, event marketing and PR services.

ENTERPRISE EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
recognizes world-class HR programs that transform their organization and achieve breakthrough results. This designation is the next step beyond the HCM Excellence Awards, which focus on a single program, and looks at the department as a whole.

SMARTCHOICE® PREFERRED PROVIDER PROGRAM
uniquely places HR service and technology companies at the top of organizations' consideration list of vendors. It adds an unmatched level of credibility based on Brandon Hall Group™'s twenty-eight-plus years experience in evaluating and selecting the best solution providers for leading organizations around the world.

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